

**EXPLORING FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' ABSENTEEISM  
AT A TVET COLLEGE IN NELSON MANDELA BAY DISTRICT**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

  
.....  
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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my late father Madoda Given Myataza. He didn't live to see me graduate. This is for him.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following:

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## SUMMARY

The technical and vocational education and training, (TVET) sector has shown a rapid growth since 1998 in South Africa. This sector aimed to provide education and training to empower the youth of South Africa. Policies were established and put in place to manage students' attendance, however, absenteeism seemed to be on the rise. This study aimed to explore factors influencing students' absenteeism and recommend strategies to address the factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET College in Nelson Mandela Bay District. In an attempt to address the aim of this study, a qualitative research approach was employed and a case study method was used. Data were collected by means of focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

The findings of this study revealed that student absenteeism was caused by students' factors, college-related factors and socio-economic factors. This study revealed that National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) was the major contributing factor in students' absenteeism due to delayed payments. With respect to the negative impacts of students' absenteeism, the findings of the study further revealed that lecturers are experiencing hardships in completing the syllabi on schedule time. The result revealed that student attendance policy was ineffective to manage student attendance. This study recommended that the TVET college should exercise discipline to students and establish a disciplinary committee. This will ensure that the students adhere to the attendance policy and improve students' attendance.

**KEYWORDS:** students' attendance, students' absenteeism, unauthorised absenteeism, authorised absenteeism, academic performance, policy and strategies.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AIDS-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ACR –	Acting Registrar
DBE-	Department of Basic Education
DHET-	Department of Higher Education and Training
FET-	Further Education and Training
HIV-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ISAT-	Integrated Summative Assessment Tasks
NATED -	National Accredited Technical Education Diploma
NC(V)-	National Certificate (Vocational)
NSFAS-	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
SSS-	Student Support Services
TVET-	Technical Vocational Education and Training

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
SUMMARY.....	iv
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
LIST OF ANNEXURES.....	xii

### CHAPTER ONE: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTER .....	1
1.2 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY .....	3
1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	3
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	4
1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	5
1.6.1 Objectives of the study .....	5
1.7 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	5
1.7.1 Sub questions.....	5
1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK USED.....	6
1.8.1 Application of the theoretical framework to the study.....	7
1.9 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE AND RESEARCH PARADIGM.....	8
1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	8

1.10.1 Qualitative research design.....	8
1.10.2 Justification of using qualitative research design.....	9
1.11 RESEARCH METHOD .....	9
1.11.1 Case study.....	9
1.12 POPULATION AND SAMPLING.....	9
1.13 PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.....	10
1.14 DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND PROCEDURE.....	10
1.15 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.....	11
1.16 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	11
1.17 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS .....	12
1.18 ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTERS .....	12
1.19 CONCLUSION .....	13

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	14
2.2 DHET's STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY.....	15
2.2.1 Overview of attendance and punctuality policy of a TVET College in Nelson Mandela Bay District.....	17
2.3 DEFINITION OF STUDENTS' ABSENTEEISM.....	18
2.4 CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENTS' ABSENTEEISM.....	18
2.5 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENTS' ABSENTEEISM.....	21
2.5.1 STUDENT-RELATED FACTORS.....	21
2.5.1.1 Student lateness.....	21
2.5.1.2 Student illness.....	21
2.5.1.3 Peer influence.....	22
2.5.2 HOME- RELATED FACTORS.....	22
2.5.2.1 Parent control or involvement .....	22
2.5.2.2 Family support.....	23
2.5.2.3 Parent or family sickness.....	23
2.5.2.4 Death of parents or family member.....	23



2.5.2.5 Unstable family background.....	24
2.5.3 COLLEGE-RELATED FACTORS.....	24
2.5.3.1 Lecturer and student relationship.....	24
2.5.3.2 Attendance policy.....	24
2.5.3.3 Poor facilities .....	24
2.5.3.4 Disliking lecturer or subject.....	25
2.5.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS.....	25
2.5.4.1 Poverty.....	25
2.5.4.2 Employment status .....	25
2.5.4.3 Education costs.....	25
2.6 IMPORTANCE OF ATTANDANCE.....	26
2.7 CONSENQUENCES OF STUDENT ABSENTEEISM.....	27
2.8 MEASURES TO DEAL WITH STUDENTS' ABSENTEEISM.....	28
2.8.1 Register and recording student attendance.....	28
2.8.2 Monitoring student attendance.....	28
2.8.3 Exercising discipline.....	29
2.9 MANAGING STUDENTS' ABSENTEEISM IN TVET COLLEGE.....	29
2.10 CONCLUSION.....	30
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b>	
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	32
3.2. PILOT PHASE OF THE STUDY.....	32
3.3 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY.....	32
3.3.1Epistemology.....	33
3.3.2Research paradigm.....	33
3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH.....	34
3.4.1Defining the qualitative research method for the study.....	34

3.4.2 Addressing the challenges and benefits of using qualitative research method.....	35
3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	35
3.5.1 Design .....	35
3.5.2 Qualitative research design.....	36
3.5.3 Empirical research (Qualitative).....	36
3.6 RESEARCH METHODS.....	36
3.6.1 Case study.....	37
3.6.2 Challenges of using case study.....	37
3.6.2.1 Addressing challenges incurred in using a case study.....	37
3.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	38
3.7.1. Site .....	38
3.7.2 Sampling procedure.....	38
3.7.3 Data collection strategy.....	39
3.7.4 Data analysis.....	39
3.7.5 Researcher's role.....	41
3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY.....	41
3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	42
3.9.1 Ethical research phase 1 (prior to beginning the field study.....	42
3.9.2 Ethical research phase 2 (beginning the field study) .....	42
3.9.3 Ethical research phase 3 (collecting the data) .....	43
3.9.4 Ethical research phase 4 (analysing the data) .....	43
3.9.5 Ethical research phase 5 (reporting, sharing and storing data) .....	43
3.10 BENCHMARK FOR EVALUATION CRITERIA OF DISSERTATION.....	44
3.11 CONCLUSION.....	45

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	46
4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS.....	46
4.3 EMERGENT THEMES.....	48
4.3.1 Theme 1: Factors influencing students' absenteeism.....	50
4.3.1.1 Transport issues.....	50
4.3.1.2 Family background issues.....	52
4.3.1.3 NSFAS allowance as contributing factor.....	53
4.3.1.4 Personal factors as contributing factor.....	55
4.3.1.5 Student related factors .....	57
4.3.1.6 Disliking the course.....	58
4.3.1.7 College related issue.....	58
4.3.1.8 Issues with lecturers.....	59
4.3.2. Theme 2: Challenges posed by students' absenteeism to lecturers and management .....	61
4.3.2.1 Lesson planning of a lecturer.....	61
4.3.2.2 Student performance.....	62
4.3.2.3 Lack of support from college management to lecturers.....	64
4.3.3 Theme 3: Measures in place to manage factors influencing student absenteeism.....	65
4.3.3.1 Tracking system as management tool.....	66
4.3.3.2 Attendance policy of students as management tool.....	67
4.3.4 Theme 4: Strategies to manage and reduce student absenteeism.....	70
4.3.4.1 Attendance timetable of students.....	70
4.3.4.2 Support for lecturers .....	71
4.3.4.3 Student support services .....	72
4.3.4.4 Transport for students .....	73
4.3.4.5 Accommodation for students .....	74
4.3.4.6 NSFAS allowance.....	74
4.3.4.7 Extra mural activities .....	75
4.4 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS .....	75

4.5 CONCLUSION.....	76
---------------------	----

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 INTRODUCTION .....	78
------------------------	----

5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS.....	78
------------------------------	----

5.3 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	79
---------------------------------------	----

5.3.1 Theme 1: Factors influencing students' absenteeism.....	79
---	----

5.3.2 Theme 2: Challenges posed by students' absenteeism to lecturers and management.....	81
---	----

5.3.3 Theme 3: Measure in place to manage factors influencing student absenteeism .....	83
---	----

5.3.4 Theme 4: Strategies to manage and reduce student absenteeism.....	83
---	----

5.4 CONCLUSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	85
--	----

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	85
--------------------------	----

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	86
-----------------------------------	----

5.7 FUTURE RESEARCH.....	87
--------------------------	----

<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>88</b>
------------------------	-----------

### **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 4.1: The Biographical information of lecturers .....	47
--	----

Table 4.2: The Biography information of students.....	47
---	----

Table 4.3: The Biography information of college managers respectively.....	48
--	----

Table 4.4: Research questions, themes and sub –themes.....	49
--	----

### **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of predictors of TVET students' absenteeism.....	7
---	---

Figure 2.1: Distinction between authorised and unauthorised absenteeism.....	20
--	----

Figure 3.1 Data analysis process.....	40
---------------------------------------	----

## **LIST OF ANNEXURES**

ANNEXURE A: Letter for permission .....	94
ANNEXURE B: Permission letter .....	95
ANNEXURE C: Ethical clearance certificate .....	96
ANNEXURE D: Letter for language editing.....	98
ANNEXURE E: Interview schedule for Students.....	99
ANNEXURE F: Interview schedule for Lecturers.....	100
ANNEXURE G: Interview schedule for SSS.....	101
ANNEXURE F: Interview schedule for Acting registrar .....	102

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTER**

This chapter presents an introduction and background of the study. The chapter outlined the problem statement, the purpose for the study, and the significance of the study. This chapter also provided main research and sub questions. The theoretical framework that supported the study and its application to the study were discussed. Philosophical perspective and research paradigm, data collection and analysis were also discussed. The overview of the study was clarified and, the limitations of the study were interpreted, definition of terms is operationalised. A summary and a description of the organisation of the dissertation concluded chapter one.

### **1.2 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Gewer (2010) states that the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education system had shown rapid growth, since 1998, in South Africa. This sector aimed to provide education and training to empower the youth of South Africa. According to the education system in South Africa, Technical and Vocational Educational and Training is a post high school education and training aimed to provide its students with some wide career choices. Currently, South Africa has fifty registered TVET colleges, with more than 264 campuses spread across rural and urban areas (TVET College Times, 2018:3).

TVET colleges are structured to accommodate students both with or without matric certificates, to further their studies. The TVET institutions offer the National Certificate (Vocational) (NC(V), National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) programmes which were also known as Report 191 and occupational qualifications. The NC(V) comprised of seven subjects: three of these subjects are fundamental subjects, namely Life Orientation, English and Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics, and four of these are vocational subjects, while NATED programmes comprises of N-courses. As indicated in the opening paragraph, technical and vocational education seems to be

growing in South Africa as many students leave the traditional matric route to pursue their studies in vocational qualification.

TVET colleges are administered by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training. TVET colleges are governed by South African Policy -such as Education and Training Act 16 of 2006; the Public Further Education and Training to ensuring a better quality in education and training. In addition, the Further Education and Training Act of 2006 guides TVET colleges on how to take corrective measures in disciplining students (TVET Colleges South Africa, 2018). On the other hand, the College Attendance and Punctual Policy of 2012; the Code of Conduct and other regulations aimed to give guidance to TVET colleges on issues such as students' discipline and student behavior. These policies assist TVET colleges to improve the quality of education. In fact, it is hard to foster education when students are not attending classes. As the result of this, their academic performance tended to be impacted negatively.

Sharmin, Azim, Choudhury and Kamrun (2016) claim that students' absenteeism was a major concern in higher education globally. In South African TVET colleges in particular, the problem seemed to be worsening, even though students were expected to obtain eighty percent attendance in all scheduled classes. Policies were established and put in place to manage students' attendance, however, absenteeism seemed to be on the rise. Although students were alerted about the Code of Conduct and Further Education and Punctual Attendance Policy Act of 2012, however, this problem seemed to be worsening. According to the Further Education and Training Act 16 of 2006, with reference to the students' Code of Conduct issued by the DHET (2012), student offences ranged from grade one to grade four stages and absenteeism is perceived to be grade one offence. Grade two to grade four offences received high priority and disciplinary procedure. Considering the magnitude of this problem, and the likely hood that majority of students fell within grade two to grade four offences hence this problem warranted the investigation.

### **1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

The fundamental reason for undertaking the study was to explore and recommend strategies that can be employed to address factors influencing students' absenteeism at a selected TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District. As a lecturer at one of the campuses of the TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District, I have observed over the years, the way students' absenteeism was growing so rapidly and spirally getting out of hand. During these seven years of lecturing at TVET college, I have witnessed lecturers struggling with challenges of completing the curriculum as a result of non-attendance of classes by students, and that it impacted on their academic performance. After all, lecturers' performances are measured on the number of students that passed the subjects.

I believe that there should be some adequate strategies to manage students' absenteeism and in order avoid possibilities that might lead to students' dropout. I further believed that the success of an institution depended upon the number of students retained and the pass rate. However, there is little research evidence in TVET colleges that attempted to identify factors influencing students' absenteeism and strategies that can be employed to manage the challenge. Therefore, this study becomes relevant and the problem warrants an investigation.

### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Students' absenteeism was a big challenge in public TVET colleges in South Africa (Wadesango & Machingambi, 2011). Sharing the same view, Kousalya, Ravindranath and Vizaya Kumar (2006) maintain that student non-attendance is a main challenge at colleges and that it attains more importance in educational institutions. Kousalya, Ravindranath and Kumar (2006) argue that student absenteeism is always discussed in academic circles, but that very few studies are conducted on this phenomenon. Absenteeism impacts on academic performance of students (Khalid & Mehmood, 2017). Some concepts or contents of the curriculum were covered while students were absent. Conducting a lesson was difficult because, at times, the lecturer had to start a previous lesson in order to accommodate students who were absent, which then consumed a lot



of time. However, lecturers are committed to offer intervention or catch up plans to finish the curriculum. These plans collapsed since students were not attending the programme which were planned to benefit them. Lecturers and college management sacrificed their holidays, afternoons and Saturdays to provide the catch-up plans to support students who do not attend classes. College management at times was forced to secure the services of external lecturers to accommodate students who failed a subject or subjects with lower marks, and at times students were affected by the subject clashes in the timetable and ended up not attending certain classes because of these circumstances. All of these efforts were put in place just to ensure that students were assisted with catch-up classes in order to complete the syllabi.

In the case of Eastcape Midlands TVET College, there is little or no research evidence pointing towards the identification of factors influencing student absenteeism. Therefore, this study seeks to shed light on factors influencing students' absenteeism and subsequently recommend strategies that might be put in place to deal with the identified challenges.

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

It was assumed that the findings of this study would contribute to improving students' class attendance. The results of the study would also help the student support service (SSS) office to improve on their support towards students who were experiencing challenges to attend classes. Lecturers and management of the TVET institutions would also benefit as the study aimed to offer strategies on how to deal with the challenge of students' absenteeism. It is also assumed that the study would influence the re-visit of some certain sections of the DHET and colleges policies that deal with students' code of conduct. Finally, the findings of this study would also shed light on other TVET colleges in the country (South Africa) on how to deal with the challenge of students' non-class attendance.

## **1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to explore factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District and also to offer strategies that can be employed to deal with the challenges.

### **1.6.1 Objectives of the study**

This study aimed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Determine factors influencing class attendance as perceived by students.
- Establish the challenges posed by student absenteeism to the college management and lecturers.
- Discover the kind of measures put in place to managing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District.
- Identify strategies that can be recommended to deal with the factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District.

## **1.7 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION**

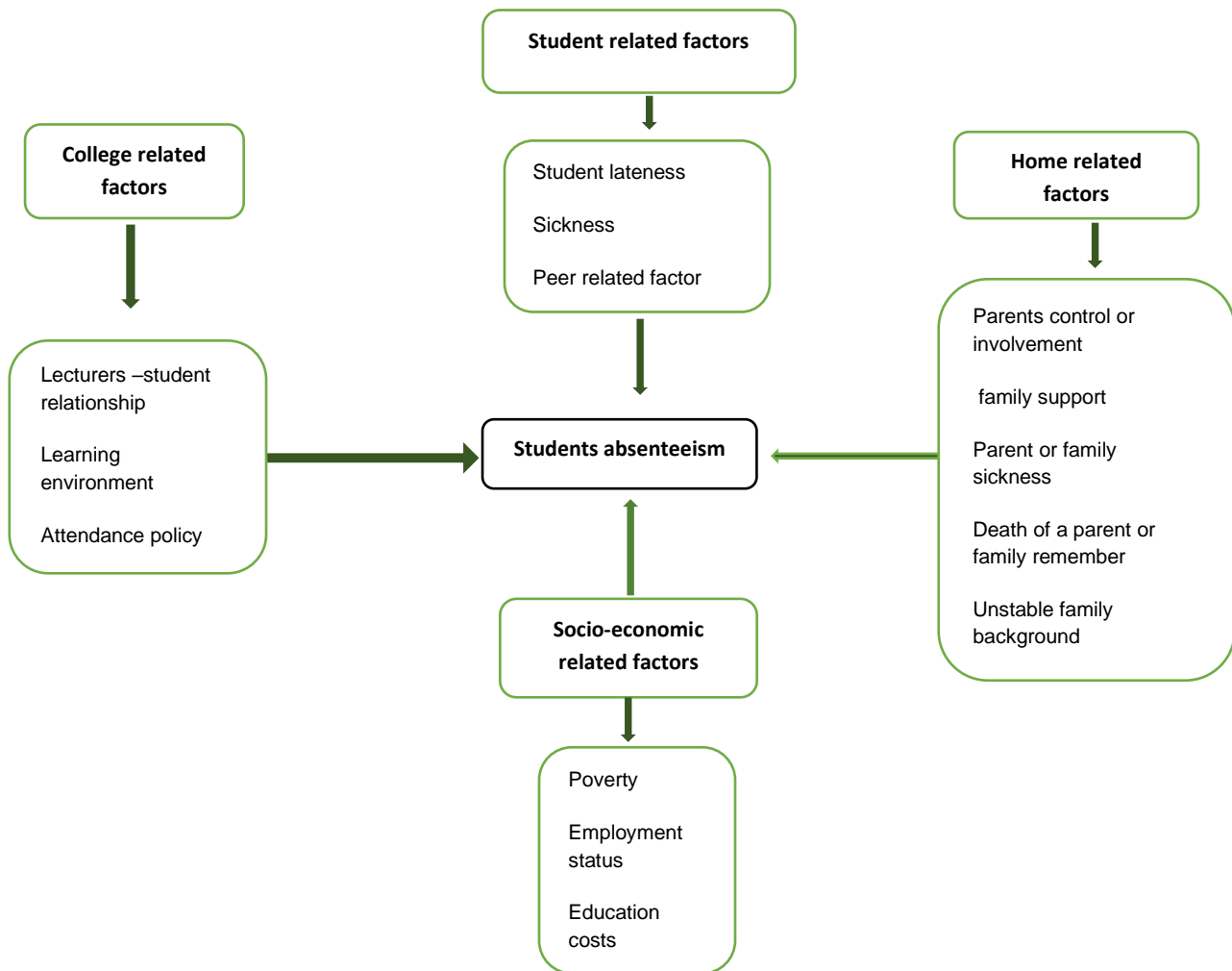
Which factors are influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET College in Nelson Mandela Bay District and which strategies that can be recommended to deal with the challenge?

### **1.7.1 Sub-questions**

- What do students perceive as factors that affect their class attendance?
- What are the challenges posed by students' absenteeism to the college management and lecturers?
- What kind of measures are in place to deal with factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District?
- Which strategies can be recommended to deal with factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District?

## **1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK USED**

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011), define theoretical framework as an anchor that connects the researcher or research to an existing phenomenon. The same view is also shared by Polit and Beck (2012) who add that a theoretical framework was the overall conceptual underpinning of the study. Creswell (2013) indicates that a theory was an interrelated set of constructs formed into propositions that specified the relationship among variable. This study tapped on the original work of Taunton, Hope, Woods and Bott (1995) which investigated and predicted list of factors that influenced Nurses Absenteeism. However, this model was adapted by Simelane (2013) in her study which investigated factors that contributed to absenteeism among bursary students at a selected nursing campus in KwaZulu-Natal. The researcher found the original work of Taunton, Hope, Woods and Bott (1995) and the adapted version of Simelane suitable and consequently guided the current study. The adapted version portrayed the causes of students' absenteeism as three-tiered. It was based on personal factors of the student, college related factors and reasons in the clinical areas, along with their characteristics. The focus in this current study included the three-tiered factors and characteristics perceived to be contributing to TVET students' absenteeism. The researcher described factors along with characteristics perceived to be contributing to TVET students' absenteeism guided by the study objectives. Figure 1.1 depicts factors along with characteristic which formed the basis of the study.



Adapted from Simelane (2013:32)

**Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of predictors of TVET students' absenteeism**

### 1.8.1 Application of the theoretical framework to the study

Conceptual framework adapted from Simelane (2013), assembled the characteristics that are relevant to students' absenteeism. The study objectives, literature and research questions were designed along the structure of frameworks. The conceptual framework of Simelane (2013) assisted the researcher in understanding the phenomenon and it revealed assumptions that were related to students' absenteeism.

Figure 1.1 elucidates that students' absenteeism in the TVET college was influenced by student factors and the characteristics such as student lateness, student sickness and peer pressure. College factors that influenced students' absenteeism included lecturer-student relationship, learning environment and the attendance policy. Socio-economic factors that influenced students' absenteeism included poverty, employment status and education costs. Home factors that contributed in student absenteeism were such as parents' control or involvement, family support, parents or family sickness, death of a parent or family member and unstable home environment. Further discussion and application of the of the conceptual framework were provided in chapter two and chapter five, respectively.

## **1.9 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE AND RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Creswell (2014) argued that a researcher's philosophical perspective may be hidden in research but always informs and influences the actual practice of research. Creswell labeled this as a paradigm, which is a basic set of beliefs that guided a researcher's action to a study. This study was premised within the confines of constructivism paradigm. Constructivism believed that reality is created by social world (De Vos et al, 2011). Additionally, constructivism paradigm agreed to involvement of participants in the research study. Constructivism model permitted engagement between researcher and participants in the research study. In this case, the participants shared with the researcher the factors that hamper their daily lecture attendance. Participants had an influence and voice in the research study (De Vos et al, 2011).

## **1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **1.10.1 Qualitative research design**

Qualitative research was employed in this study using a case study design. According to De Vos et al (2011), qualitative research was a method that aimed to give meaning and understanding to the experience of participants in the research study.

### **1.10.2 Justification of using qualitative research design**

Qualitative research strategy was used in the study. Qualitative research was used to understand and give details to human experience in social discipline. Additionally, qualitative research was used to construct an in-depth understanding of the research case (Neuman, 2014). The participants were involved in responding to social discipline of the study. Qualitative research permitted the researcher to give a prior understanding of the phenomenon. This research design was used because it investigated the background or the root in order to understand the factors influencing students' absenteeism at a selected TVET college. Additionally, qualitative research gave words to express participants' perceptions in the study.

## **1.11 RESEARCH METHOD**

### **1.11.1 Case study**

Case study method was used in this proposed study. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:288) define a case study research as "an in-depth analysis of one or more events, settings, programmes, social groups, communities, individuals or other bounded systems in their natural context". This study was contextual in that the identification of factors influencing students' absenteeism was studied at each TVET college without interfering with the process. This provided the grounds for proposing that the study has adopted a case study approach. The study intends to examine the problem in detail. A case study method was employed for the reasons that the study proposed using interviews and documents recorded in the research study (De Vos et al, 2011). This study made use of interviews to understand the research questions and documented analysis to assess how the DHET attendance policy used to assist the TVET College in managing students' attendance.

## **1.12 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

The research was conducted in the three premises of Eastcape Midlands TVET College. Both campuses are situated in the urban area of Nelson Mandela Bay District, in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Participants were selected based on their personal involvement in the research topic (Bhattacharjee, 2012). The participants of the

study were students, lecturers and management of the TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District. This study made use of three students from each campus which equaled a sample size of six students. The study proposed to use three lecturers from each campus which equalled a sample size of six lecturers. Two management personnel were involved, a student support services official and an acting registrar. The sampling total was equal to fourteen participants. Students were selected to give their perspective on factors that affected their class attendance, lecturers and management of the TVET College were involved to answer the main research question and sub questions of the study.

### **1.13 PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

The researcher aimed to be considerate towards all participants of the study. The researcher asked approval for permission from the principal of the selected TVET College to conduct research at the selected campuses. The participants were informed about the purpose and objectives of the study. Furthermore, the researcher assured the participants that their identity would be protected and that their names would remain anonymous during the process of research and even after the research was conducted. The researcher allowed participants to participate voluntarily in the study. In addition, the researcher ensured that participants were not bribed to participate in the study.

### **1.14 DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND PROCEDURE**

The study proposed to collect data by using focus group interviews, individual interviews and documented analysis. Data collecting method that was used to interview students was focus group. Focus group have consented everyone to participate (De Vos et al, 2011). Additionally, participants were selected according to the relevance to the study. Individual interviews were applied to lecturers and management staff. This method was used to gather participants' points of views on one-on-one research study. Interviews were used with the purpose of capturing the views of participants and gathering more comprehensive information in the research phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Official government documents such as public further education and training college attendance policy was reviewed to strengthen and understand the magnitude of the research problem (De Vos et al, 2011 & Creswell, 2014).

In addition, the study used tape recording and notes to gather data. Creswell (2014) recommends that a tape-recording technique be applied when interviews are conducted. This technique allowed the researcher to lead interviews and not to be distracted and worried about taking notes.

### **1.15 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Data collected from interviews were transcribed into sentences to make sense and meaning of the data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Coding was used in this study to organise and label data into phrases that connected to research questions (Neuman, 2014). Data were grouped into similar patterns that emerged from data provided by participants (Ary, Jacob, Sorensen & Razavieh, 2010). DHET attendance policy was analysed and interpreted into similar themes produced from interviews (Owen, 2014).

### **1.16 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted at a selected TVET College at Nelson Mandela Bay district, and the findings of the study were not to be generalised across all TVET colleges in South Africa. The second limitation concerned the availability and time to conduct the study since some participants were not willing to participate in the study. The study chose a volunteer method and participants pulled out and the number of participants was reduced.

The study proposed to restrict itself to investigate factors that affected students' absenteeism in a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay. The study restricted itself to Eastcape Midlands College due to costs and time constraints. The study was conducted at two campuses and head office of the college where students, lecturers and management participated. The study included six students, six lecturers, a student support service manager and acting registrar.



## **1.17 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS**

**1.17.1 Absenteeism:** Case & Jet (2007:8) defined absenteeism as an act of a student who is not at school for a day.

**1.17.2 Academic performance:** Jayanthi, Balakrishnan, Ching, Latiff and Nasirudeen (2014:752) defined academic performance as the grade point average scores of a student, which included tests, course work and examinations.

**1.17.3 Dropout:** Álvares and Estêvão (2014) defined dropout as a student who withdraw from school before completing a course or qualification.

**1.17.4 Retention:** This is the process which aimed to ensure student achievement or completion of a grade or course (Kramer & Associate, 2003:53).

## **1.18 ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTERS**

The study comprised of five chapters which are organised as follows:

**Chapter one:** This chapter gave the background of the study, statement of problem, rationale for the study, research methodology and design.

**Chapter two:** This chapter provided a literature review on factors influencing students' absenteeism and challenges that these factors posed to the TVET college and which strategies were recommended to deal with this challenge.

**Chapter three:** This chapter has detailed the research methodology and design that was used in the study.

**Chapter four:** This chapter focused on the data collection, data analysis methods and research findings regarding factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in the Nelson Mandela Bay District.

**Chapter five:** Chapter five gave the summary of the research, the conclusions drawn from the research findings and gave recommendations for implementing solutions to improving the factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in the Nelson Mandela Bay District.

## **1.19 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the organisation of the study. The background to the study, problem statement, rationale of the study, significance of the study, main objectives and research questions of the study were discussed. Philosophical perspective and research paradigm, data collection and analysis were also discussed. The overview of the study was clarified and, the limitations of the study were interpreted, and the definition of terms is operationalised. The next chapter presents reviewed literature related to the study on factors contributing to students' absenteeism, impacts of student absenteeism and strategies to managing students' absenteeism in the TVET College.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors influencing student absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District and also to determine strategies that might be recommended to deal with these challenges. I searched for literature that seemed to be relevant for the study. I used many databases including the university library, EBSCO, Google Scholar, Eric database to find information regarding student absenteeism.

I used search terms such as absenteeism, students' absenteeism, attendance, factors contributing to student absenteeism, academic performance, managing student absenteeism, and TVET colleges to find information for my study.

The literature review provides the researcher with accumulated knowledge about the topic and what other researchers have done in that area. In addition, literature review assists the researcher to evaluate the phenomenon by comparing the results of the previous study to previous research (Creswell, 2014). Literature review helps to connect the findings of the study to existing literature, and, also to assist a researcher to determine if the research topic is worth to be researched (De Vos et al, 2011).

The following section presents topic areas that were explored to further understand the problem of student absenteeism: overview of the DHET students' attendance and punctuality policy for TVET colleges, overview of attendance and punctuality policy of a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District, definition of students' absenteeism, classification of students' absenteeism, factors contributing to students' absenteeism, importance of attendance, impact of students' absenteeism on academic performance, measures to deal with students' absenteeism and managing student absenteeism in TVET colleges.

## **2.2 DHET's STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

Further Education and Training (FET) college attendance and punctuality policy regulates compulsory of college attendance and responsibility of college staff and student in this regard. The policy places the emphasis and responsibility of college attendance on college staff and students. The policy forces students to attend all college classes. In addition, the attendance policy requires students to obtain a minimum of eighty percent of class attendance.

Attendance policy compiled by the DHET instructs students to attend college classes and be punctual to all planned classes. It is mandatory for students to understand the importance of class attendance and communicate with the lecturers concerning lateness and absence. The student has a responsibility to monitor his or her own attendance. Policy emphasis that student must research or inquire about consequences that shall befall on him or her concerning missing class to college staff.

DHET student attendance policy outlaw's students to have employment or job activities that interrupt the college attendance. However, a student is encouraged to make any kind of arrangements for authorised absence with the lecturer or college. Generally, DHET student attendance policy places responsibility on students to catch-up to any work that was done during their absence or lateness.

On the other hand, the college staff is responsible to communicate with students in emphasising the importance of attendance and punctuality at the college. The attendance policy states that students should be inducted before the official commencement of classes. In addition, the policy advises the TVET colleges staff to issue the code of conduct to students and sign it. It is mandatory for the college staff to convey a message to the students that poor attendance or lateness is not acceptable. Attendance policy gives all authority to TVET colleges to discipline students who do not comply with the rules set by DHET. College staff is expected to give guidelines or guidance on how students should communicate their intention of being absent and lateness.

The DHET student attendance policy place the college staff to provide attendance register and that attendance of students should be recorded. Communication can be made well

in advance by the student to a lecturer or programme manager concerning absenteeism or lateness. Cases such as student illness or sickness cannot be communicated well in advance. The only cases that can be communicated in advance are court appearance, driving tests, government or organisational voluntary, religious holiday. A student absence form must be completed by the student when he or she returns to the college and signed by the lecturer. Although sickness is considered as an excused absence it can also turn to be unauthorised if a student does not provide a medical certificate when returning to the college. The policy encourages the student support service to give support to students with disability or learning difficulties, as that affects their attendance or ability to arrive on time.

College staff is advised to discipline students with unauthorised absence. The guideline from the DHET state that there shall be three stages with reference to disciplining the students. The first stage is a formal warning from a lecturer and at least three warnings should be given to the student. Second stage when the behavior is escalating an absence review meeting with the student, lecturer and programme manager must be initiated. The formal absence review meeting can be initiated where a student has a pattern of absence like not attending specific periods or lecture or does not come to college on every Monday or Friday. In addition, when a student's absence is below eighty percent in a week or has more absence in a four-week period.

Stage three is a formal hearing with the academic manager of the college. The formal hearing is established when the above processes have been unsuccessful. This stage leads to a final warning. The college academic manager may in such a case refuse a student to seat for the final examinations. Furthermore, the attendance policy gives control to college to exclude student that does not meet the necessary attendance percentage in a particular subject or subjects. Student attendance policy state that student attendance must be verified by the college staff before issuing and excluding student from examination. Additionally, the attendance is also used as tool to for students to be awarded with National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Attendance is imperative as per DHET guidelines, a student who does not meet the necessary attendance cannot be considered for NSFAS payment such as tuition, travel and

accommodation. The payment can only be done when student attendance has been reviewed including the authorised absence. The public further education and training college attendance and punctuality policy remains to be managing tool for TVET colleges in managing student attendance and can also be a good tool when applied effectively.

### **2.2.1 Overview of attendance and punctuality policy of a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District.**

The TVET College in the Nelson Mandela Bay District has adopted the further education and training attendance policy of 2012. The policy serves to guide the TVET Colleges in managing and disciplining the students on matters that have to do with students' absenteeism.

A TVET College enrolls students for each academic and conducts an induction programme briefing students about the importance of college attendance and what it means to be punctual for classes. The focus is placed on new student enrolled and the TVET college partly implements the DHET guidelines.

College management and lecturers are responsible to provide a register to students for each period and a student absence form in ensuring quality monitoring process of students' attendance. The college encourages student to communicate their intentions of being absent in advance to register lecturer or senior lecturer and complete the absence form on their return (DHET,2012). The absence form is the compulsory document that student must sign as is recommended by DHET. In this case student absence form and attendance register are kept in file in case they will be needed to review their attendance history.

DHET denounces students who arrive late for classes and give the colleges to record the student with "L" as a sign that the student was late for the period or subject.

The attendance policy clearly states that students with attendance that is below the agreed level should be taken to disciplinary process (DHET, 2012). Attendance policy divides the misbehavior into three stages:

Stage one: briefly outlines the process in handling student misbehavior with reference to student attendance and that formal warning should be conducted. However, the TVET college has never applied formal warning to address the absenteeism. The college cannot apply stage two that declares a formal warning meeting must be scheduled if the behavior persists. Stage three of disciplinary process is a formal hearing with academic manager. These seems not to exist because the college is not fully implementing the DHET attendance policy. The college does not exclude student for final examinations based on the absenteeism. DHET attendance policy asserts that students who do not comply with the agreed attendance should be excluded from examinations (DHET, 2012). And if all these issues are not addressed adequately, the problem of students' absenteeism will continue to rise.

### **2.3 DEFINITION OF STUDENTS' ABSENTEEISM**

Absenteeism is defined as an act of a student who is not at college for a day (Case & Jet, 2007). Cook and Ezenne (2010) defined absenteeism as a persistent, habitual and unexplained absence from college. Simelane (2013) on the other hand, refers to absenteeism as a day missed by student in academic or practical placements. However, a student is considered present at college when they are attending a class or participating in college activities that are within or outside college premises when the register is marked (Case & Jet, 2007). DHET (2012) attendance policy considered twenty percent as average time student can miss classes.

### **2.4 CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENT ABSENTEEISM**

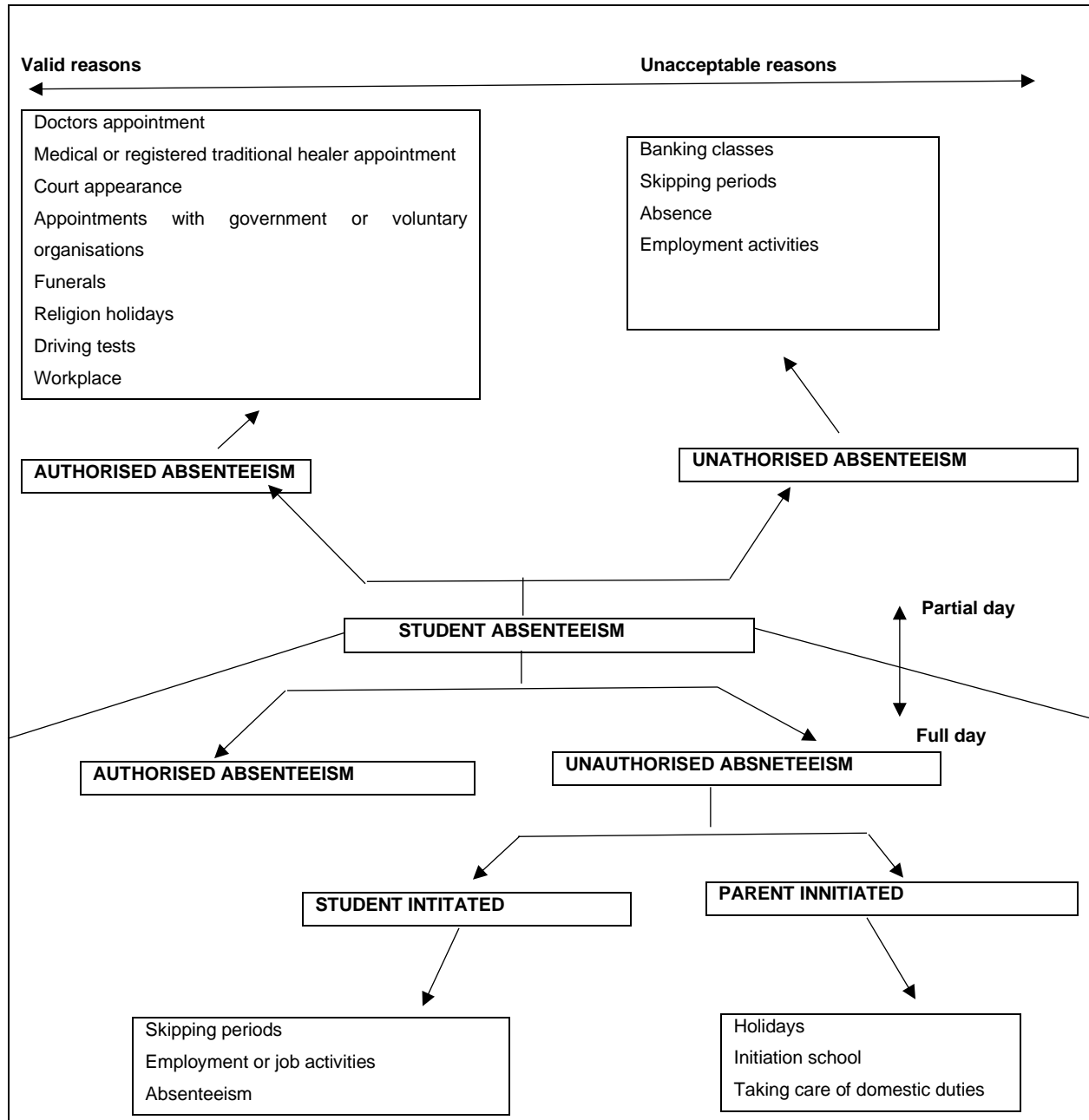
Students' absenteeism varied from authorised and unauthorised absence (Otto, 2016). Authorised absence is considered to be permissible when student has communicated his or her intentions of being absent from college through the lecturer or college manager permission and unauthorised absenteeism is absence without permission (Otto, 2016). However, authorised absenteeism of the student still needs to be marked as absent in the class register of the college. In addition, DHET attendance policy states that student should be marked absent even though he or she has communicated the intentions of

being absent. Student's proof with regards to authorised absence will be reviewed when attendance of student is below the agreed percentage.

According to DHET attendance policy, authorised absence includes student sickness, funeral, government or organisational voluntary, driving tests, work placement, court appearance and religion holidays. Furthermore, the attendance policy states that a student needs to submit proof for his or her absence and complete a student absence form. Unauthorised absenteeism in the TVET college is viewed as an absence without a valid reason and when a student fails to submit proof upon his or her arrival the following day at college that concludes as unauthorised absence. Register is a recommended tool to monitor student absenteeism (Otto, 2016 & DHET, 2012).

Figure 2.1 adapted from Otto (2016:10) shows the type of absenteeism that form the basis of this study. This figure exhibits a distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence as well as the reasons (valid or unacceptable) associated with each type of absenteeism. Additionally, it also draws a distinction between partial and full day absence. Partial absence means that the student is absent for certain period and full day means that student is absent for the entire day at college.





**Figure 2.1: Distinction between authorised and unauthorised absenteeism**

## **2.5 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENTS' ABSENTEEISM**

The factors contributing to students' absenteeism will be discussed under the following categories: student-related factors, home-related factors, college-related factors and socio-economic related factors. Student-related factors include lateness of student, student sickness and peer pressure. Home-related factors include parent control or involvement, family support and financial problems. College factors include lecturer relationship with student, learning environment and attendance policy. Socio-economic factors characteristics include poverty, economic status and education costs.

### **2.5.1 STUDENT-RELATED FACTORS**

#### **2.5.1.1 Student lateness**

Cook and Ezenne (2010) established that students became absent from college due to lateness. Boshego (2012), claims that students plan to be late just to miss the period. Additionally, a student who does not have the homework or does not want to attend the class would arrive late at college just to miss the period or just to get away with the punishment. Mboweni (2014) and Oghuvbu (2008), claimed that students sometime go to bed late that affects the student punctuality and moreover it can cause student to stay at home and miss the entire day at college. Otto (2016), Maile and Olowoyo (2017), highlighted that students arrive late at college especially in winter season as students indicate that they are experiencing cold. According to Oghuvbu (2008) claim, that there is a connection between students' lateness and absenteeism.

#### **2.5.1.2 Student's sickness**

A student can be absent from college because of sickness and sometimes a student would lie just not to go to college (Cook & Ezenne,2010). Ajiboye and Tella (2006), claim that student attendance is affected due to health challenges that the student is facing. Student who is experiencing health problems can miss more of scheduled classes due to physical health. The TVET college in the Nelson Mandela Bay District faces a high number of absenteeism as students claimed that they were sick and could not come to college. Otto (2016) indicates that students are more absent during the winter season

because the coldness causes influenza. Again, students who are affected by HIV and AIDS at times do not attend classes as they have to visit healthcare facilities to collect treatment or do check-ups (Ajiboye & Tella, 2006). Komakech and Osuu's (2014) findings were that HIV and AIDS is a leading contributor to students' absenteeism. Other factors that influence students' absenteeism are chronic illness which might lead to a student being out of college for days (Wallace, 2017).

#### **2.5.1.3 Peer influence**

Students associate with people who are not students and that causes a negative impact concerning class attendance (Oghuvbu, 2008 & Pehlivan, 2011). Friends that are not students will suggest entertainment activities during college hours and the students will not want to miss out on going out. In support of this, Wadesango and Machingimbi (2011) study revealed that students in tertiary education have high percentage of absenteeism because they hang out with people who are not students. Again, college students say influence each other not to attend classes or skip classes because of other social commitment.

### **2.5.2 HOME-RELATED FACTORS**

#### **2.5.2.1 Parents control or involvement**

According to Demir and Karabeyoglu (2016), parent control or lack of control may have a negative and important role on student absenteeism. For instance, a student may take advantage if their mother or father has no knowledge of student attendance policy on absenteeism or does not monitor the level of absenteeism of his or her child. Parents lack interest in the education and college activities of their students (Otto, 2016). The families would take their children to shopping, funerals, weddings or going out on a vacation or have guests at home (Şahin, Arseven & Kilic, 2016). In addition, families do not communicate with the college regarding students' absenteeism. Durborow (2017:102) claimed that "what is important to the parent is important to the child". The parents of the students they work outside of their hometowns, it is impossible for the parents to comeback on weekends at times they come back once a month and that leaves students without any guidance (Mboweni, 2014).

Cases like these could at a later stage contribute to students' absenteeism because there is no guardian or parent to encourage or monitor the student activities and movements.

#### **2.5.2.2 Family support**

Students depend on their parents or guardians for educational support (Otto, 2016). Şahin et al (2016), establish that parents lack of education has a negative effect in viewing education value. Furthermore, these authors indicate that some families do not encourage or see the need for a female child to go to school as she is going to marry in future. Other heart-breaking situations is where students lack parent support structure because are orphans and have no parents to give guidance and motivation (Mello, 2017). In such circumstances, students tend to seek advice and support from their boyfriends and girlfriends because there is no family support structure for them (Ndahepele, Daniel, Nabasenja & Kasi, 2018). Lack of family support to advise students results into to poor class attendance.

#### **2.5.2.3 Parent or family sickness**

In some instances, students are forced to look after parents or family member that are affected by HIV and AIDS or who are generally sick. Situations like these cause a burden to students and challenge to attend class regularly (Bennell, Hyde & Swainson, 2002). In addition, some students take over responsibilities of the household duties that cannot be performed by a sick person/parent. Some students in the TVET college stay with a single parent who is sick and at times it becomes difficult for a student to leave a parent while he or she needs help.

#### **2.5.2.4 Death of a parent or family member**

Death of a parent can cause a student not to attend classes. Bennell et al (2002) states that if a student loses a parent who was a breadwinner that can lead to a student dropping out due to financial issues. The death of a mother compared to that of a father is perceived to be big loss to a child as mothers are associated with nurturing and providing emotional support (Bennell et al, 2002).

#### **2.5.2.5 Unstable family background**

Unstable family background has negative effect in encouraging student attendance. Şahin et al (2016), pointed out that family problems such as violence and divorce are considered to have high negative role in student life. Mboweni (2014), states that students witnessing their parents getting into physical fights all the time might be psychologically affected, him /her and ultimately the student might lose interest in education.

### **2.5.3 COLLEGE-RELATED FACTORS**

#### **2.5.3.1 Student and lecturer relationship**

Lecturers have an important role to play concerning students' absenteeism. In these cases, it is when a lecturer makes negative remarks towards student that may result in a student staying at home not coming to college. Şahin et al (2016) claim that there is a relationship between a lecturer and students' absenteeism. Lecturers should treat students in same way and show respect. Lectures who show favoritisms amongst students that might in turn discourage students in attending classes (Wadesango & machingambi, 2011).

#### **2.5.3.2 Attendance policy**

Educational institutions do contribute to the issue of students' absenteeism. If precedence is not set correctly concerning student absenteeism, chances are that students will get the wrong message and take advantage of the situation and this may further lead to high rate of absenteeism (Demir & Karabeyoglu, 2016). College management at times does not know how to handle disciplinary hearing concerning absence (Otto, 2016). In fact, they lack strategies to implement policies and procedures in dealing with students' absenteeism. In addition, lecturers at times are not consistency when dealing with absenteeism and absconders get away with their behavior.

#### **2.5.3.3 Poor facilities**

Broken windows of classrooms may cause absenteeism (Otto, 2016). Additionally, lack of resources such as teaching facilities, relevant technology might have an impact on class attendance (Otto, 2016). Research study by Mello (2017) revealed that adult learners do not attend classes especially where the institution lacks facilities.

#### **2.5.3.4 Disliking lecturer or subject**

Non-attendance of classes in higher education institutions are at times influenced by a dislike of a subject or module, or a lecturer (Wadesango & Machingambi, 2011). These authors also indicated that students at times are not happy with teaching style or the way lesson is delivered in by a lecturer. At times students miss classes because the content is too boring (Edge Hill University, 2012). Again, students often complain that classes are long and tiring to attend the;2 whole day or classes (Simelane, 2013). Students claim that they are absent from lectures because of overload of work and trying to catch up on assignments, preparing for presentations and upcoming tests (Ginty & Boland, 2016).

### **2.5.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS**

#### **2.5.4.1 Poverty**

Case and Jet (2017) claim that poverty and hunger can be seen as factor contributing to students' absenteeism. Students become tired or weak to concentrate or even to attend the whole day. Unavailable, unreliable or unaffordable transport can also contribute to students' absenteeism (Case & Jet, 2017). Missing transport to the college can also cause student absenteeism (Şahin et al, 2016).

#### **2.5.4.2 Employment status**

Economical condition of families of students are considered as possible contributor to students' absenteeism. Many students in South Africa come from households where parents and guardians are only seasonal workers or permanently unemployed. Circumstance force students to look for employment in order to support their families (Şahin et al, 2016). Students who work part-time, their work schedule tend to impact negatively on their attendance pattern (Demir & Karabeyoglu, 2016).

#### **2.5.4.3 Education costs**

Higher education is costly and students are facing inability to pay tuition fees, taxi fare and pocket money (Ndahepele et al, 2018). In addition, higher education environment demands to have pocket money to buy new clothes as the structure of education student wear their own clothes.

## **2.6 IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE**

Khalid and Mehmoud (2017), assert that class attendance is essential because it increases the understanding of concepts, improves the grade point average scores, boosts student confidence and engaging of lecturer and peers. Koba (2011) in Thobakgale (2013), share the same view that attendance is important. DHET attendance policy indicates that class attendance is supplementary to student retention and achievement. Aden et al (2013), Guleker and Keci (2014), Khalid and Mehmoud (2017) support that attendance has great influence in academic performance of the student. A student who attends classes regularly scores better marks especially if the student is struggling (Muir,2009). Student attendance serves as an effective predictor of future academic achievement as well as for college graduation (Spradlin, Cierniak, Shi & Chen,2012). In addition, students who attend classes constantly have better chances of finishing on time at college and progress.

The benefits of attending class regularly ensure that students keep up with daily lesson, assignment and tests (Gysbers, Johnston, Hancock & Denyer,2011). Attendance provides a better and effective learning experience. The student confirms that attendance it more interesting when the lecturer is directly in front of them and students still prefer the old traditional learning method as they alluded that going to independent internet providers and paying money easily gets them distracted by Facebook and other social media platforms (Gysbers et al,2011).

Attendance serves to give good practice and responsibility to student. Nova Scotia department of education and early childhood development affirm that attendance provides a transition to further studies and workplace. Student attendance is necessary because it builds a strong foundation to student in the academic (Peek,2009). Class attendance is important because it gives students opportunities to learn the concepts and skills that will allow them to seek additional teaching at the completion of college in order to gain employment (Durborow,2017).

## **2.7 CONSEQUENCES OF STUDENT ABSENTEEISM**

Jayanthi, Balakrishnan, Ching, Latiff and Nasirudeen (2014:752) defined academic performance as a grade point average score of a student, which includes tests, course work and examinations. Guleker and Keci (2014) claim that there is a relationship between students' attendance and academic performance. Andrietti and D'Addazio (2012) also specified that attendance has a positive influence on the academic performance of the students. According to Sharmin et al (2016), lower attendance could result in the poor academic performance of the student. In addition, poor attendance does disadvantage students from obtaining tests dates, presentation dates and other academic information. Missing classes prevent a student to advance questions or to clear confusion around discussed topic (Khalid &Mehmood,2017). Otto (2016) indicates that students with high absenteeism rates fell behind with college work because students missed lecturer's explanations, class discussions and, therefore, they could not cope with college work.

Kang and Kerr (1990) assert that as absenteeism increases, students respond poor to lecturers' instructions and also they perform poor to academics, and advised regular class attendance. Lukkarinen, Koivukangas and Seppälä (2016), found that students with a high total of attendance received good examinations points. Chaubey, Kothari and Kapoor (2016) established that attendance is the best predictor for the academic performance of students. DHET (2012), with reference to the attendance policy, states that students who attend class have high chances of completing and achieving their qualification.

Klem and Connell (2004) explained that lecturers support and students' participation in decision-making within the institution play a significant role in engaging students' commitment to a learning environment. Further, they claimed that high levels of engagement are associated with high attendance and test scores. Otto (2016) also claimed that students' absenteeism does not only affect the individual students' academic performance, but the college reputation becomes affected concerning the pass rate. In addition, the DHET (2012), with reference to the Public Further Education and Training



College Attendance and Punctuality Policy, states that late coming of students effect their learning and also the progress of the class.

According to Otto (2016), students' absenteeism affects the lecturer, as they experience difficulties continuing with a new topic when students lack the previous knowledge. In addition, other students who are top achievers become frustrated with the process of repeating work and lecturers view this process as unproductive and time-consuming. Al-Shammari and Gritter (2016) propounded that attendance is a measurement in improving classroom management and the graduate rate of an institution.

Dale, Schlenker and McKinnon (1994) declared that classroom size does impact negatively on students' academic performance and students' absenteeism. They state that the ideal classroom size ranges from 16 to 30 students, and that size will foster the individual attention of the student. Kraak, Paterson and Boka (2016), indicated that students' academic performance increases employment opportunities for students and the pass rate success of the institution. In addition, companies approach institutions to give students employment opportunities to students who are excelling academically.

## **2.8 MEASURES TO DEAL WITH STUDENTS' ABSENTEEISM**

### **2.8.1 Register and recording student attendance**

Keeping attendance register records is essential when dealing with student attendance. Thobakgale (2013), describes that attendance register as an important management tool in measuring student attendance. In their study, Barwuah and Walkely (1997) highlighted that keeping attendance record is not optional but a legal requirement. It is compulsory for TVET colleges to provide attendance register for students in monitoring and managing students' attendance (DHET, 2012). Kelly (2018) states that attendance record provides the warning sign in identifying students with low attendance.

### **2.8.2 Monitoring student attendance**

Monitoring students' absenteeism deals with collecting data (Case & Jet, 2007). Lecturers and college management need to identify pattern or trends that links to student absenteeism. DHET (2012), attendance policy encourages TVET College management

to monitor student attendance and lateness on a weekly basis. Additionally, TVET colleges management are encouraged to identify pattern where a student is mostly likely to be absent and late on Mondays or Fridays. According to Case and Jet (2007), monitoring system help the TVET college in making decision and intervention for students' absenteeism. DHET places the lecturers in charge of monitoring students' absence and lateness. This happens when lecturers discuss the attendance levels of students with the college management team.

### **2.8.3 Exercising discipline**

Modise (2016) states that discipline should be enforced to students who do not attend college classes regularly. Disciplinary measures aim to encourage and uphold undisruptive college environment (Kiri, 2011). Student with higher level of absenteeism should be disciplined to send the message to other students that absenteeism is a not acceptable behavior. DHET, encourages TVET college lecturers and management teams to discipline students with unauthorised absence and those who are below the eighty percent average standard of attendance.

## **2.9 MANAGING STUDENTS' ABSENTEEISM**

Gbadamosi (2015) describes organisational policy as having a positive influence on managing institutions, and policy guides how the institution manages or handles certain cases. In addition, organisational policy is designed to reduce and minimise the potential threats that can pose to an institution. The DHET, with regards to attendance policy goals, ensures that students act in accordance with the standard requirements of attendance. Attendance monitoring is a process of managing the institution.

According to Levine (1992), students will be reluctant to attend classes if they are not required to do so. In addition, attendance policy has a significant effect in requiring students to attend classes. Thobakgale (2013) suggests that absenteeism policy should be introduced to students on their first day of enrolment. The TVET college in the Nelson Mandela Bay District should make it mandatory explain the importance of attendance, especially to new students. Levine (1992) states that attendance policy benefits students in their future studies and it may also make the life of a lecturer easy. Moreover, it may

eliminate the inconsistency of lecturers dealing with the issue of absenteeism and students will come to know what is expected of them and the consequence of not attending college.

Kramer and Associates (2003) said that retention should be the main key function of an institution in managing students. In addition, institutions have a vital role in maintaining and managing students enrolled in the academic year. According to Kramer and Associates (2003), retention involves multi methods. Lotkowksi, Robbin and Noeth (2004) claimed that retention strategies should target to reduce the high risks of student absenteeism and drop-out.

Lotkowksi et al (2004), suggest that colleges should introduce tutorial programs to increase students' commitment and confidence in education. According to Otto (2016), unauthorised absenteeism should receive high priority. John Gardner Center, in Hanover Research (2016), suggested the following strategies in managing students' absenteeism:

- Institutions must firstly inform and involve parents or guardians regarding students' absenteeism.
- Early intervention should be applied immediately when student show early signs of absenteeism.
- Institutions should introduce community projects as part of any punishment for absenteeism.

Institutions should take legal intervention and apply harsh policies to enforce students' attendance and that legal intervention must apply to extreme cases of absenteeism.

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter reviewed the literature on factors that are influencing students' absenteeism at the TVET college. Literature review in this chapter shows that factors that influence student absenteeism are student-related factors, home-related factors, college factors and socio-economic factors. This chapter also revealed that students' absenteeism has a potential of influencing student academic performance. Literature review indicated that students' absenteeism needs to be monitored and managed through various strategies.

Factors contributing to students' absenteeism at the TVET college are unknown and need an investigation. The next chapter discusses the methodology of the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provided an outline of research method that the study had used. It gave information on philosophical foundation of the study, epistemology and research paradigm. The chapter described qualitative research approach and outlined the challenges and benefits of using qualitative research method. It gave information on challenges of using case study. It provided fine points on the site and participant criteria in the study. The researcher discussed the method used to analyse data. It outlined the role of the research in the study. The ethical considerations that reinforced the study was discussed. Lastly, it provided information on benchmark evaluation criteria of the dissertation.

#### **3.2 PILOT PHASE OF THE STUDY**

According to Yin (2011) pilot study is a run trail that helps the researcher to test feasibility of the research and determined some aspects of the study. The pilot phase was conducted with the purpose of testing the research instruments. Piloting phase was conducted in the month of August 2019. The researcher ran a trail test with lecturers, students and student support service (SSS) officer participants of the TVET college. After the piloting phase, I discovered that the research questions needed to be rearranged and I then rearranged through experienced gathered from the pilot phase. The experience gained from piloting phase helped the researcher in improving research skills.

#### **3.3 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF THE STUDY**

The study had aimed to understand the problem associated with students' absenteeism and offered solutions to improve factors contributing to student absenteeism and managing them. To do this, a logical and systematic explanation of the philosophical concept of epistemology and paradigm was required.

### **3.3.1 Epistemology**

Authors have defined epistemology as philosophy that dealt with knowledge (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Tracy, 2013:38, Neuman, 2014:94 & Yin, 2011:309). Epistemology helped explain how we knew the truth or what we claimed was true (Neuman, 2014). It helped the researcher to integrate strategies that could be employed to solve the problem. Leavy (2017), describes epistemology as philosophical systems that provided information on how research was proceeded in investigating the truth. In addition, it provides the research studies with procedures and data collection method for each study investigated (Cohen, Manion & Morris, 2007). This study focused on epistemology that pursued inquiry about the truth.

Mouly (1978) in Cohen et al (2007:5), revealed that investigations concerning truth was achieved through using the three categories: experience, reasoning and research. Additionally, these features were driven in giving the evidence to the research problem. Mason (2002) clarified that not all research disciplines in qualitative research applied for the same strategy of investigating the truth. In fact, each social discipline did instrument unique strategies of inquiry. Epistemology position provided the investigator with tips on how to generate the data when involving participant's (Mason, 2002). The indicated epistemological point of views is positivism, interpretivist, constructivism and positivism (Creswell, 2014). In this study constructivism was discussed in the next section. Constructivism method dealt with applying various methods when the problem was investigated. The next section focused on the research paradigm behind the research study.

### **3.3.2 Research paradigm**

Neuman (2014:96) describes research paradigm as, "organisation frameworks for theory and research that include basic assumptions, key issues, models of quality research and methods for seeking answers". This study had made use of constructivism approach in seeking understanding and meaning to the research problem. Leavy (2017) explains paradigm as framework that give guidance in the research study to interpret the experience of the world. The theoretical perspective of constructivism suggested that in order to understand the research problem created by social, researchers had to involve

the human participants (Creswell, 2009 & Leavy, 2017). It directed the researcher to employ various instruments to collect data. The interpretation of data was merged from individuals, cultural and historical experience. Crotty (1998) in Creswell (2009:26) highlighted the assumptions that underpins constructivism:

- Researcher examined participants experience by adopting to open ended interviews.
- It gave researcher a platform to engage with participants.
- Interpreted data collected in the social settings

Constructivism was used with the aim of understanding the research problems of this study and interpreted the experience of the participants through applying qualitative study.

### **3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH**

#### **3.4.1 Defining the qualitative research method for the study**

The researcher adopted qualitative research approach to answer the research questions. De Vos et al (2011), define qualitative research as technique which gives meaning and understating of human experience. Creswell (2009) describes qualitative method as means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribed to a social or human problem. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) explain qualitative research as a method that engages, understanding and interpret participants experience in the social science. Neuman (2014), describe qualitative research as a method that gives data meaning, interpret them, or make them comprehensible. The definitions signified that qualitative method gathered data in the form of words. Qualitative research used the in-depth method to investigate the research problem. The qualitative research was suitable for the study because it allowed the researcher to get the data directly from the participants. It suggested that in order to understand the phenomena of the study, a researcher had to get close to the object that was being investigated (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

### **3.4.2 Addressing the challenge and benefits of using qualitative research method**

The time required for data collection, analysis and interpreting data were lengthy (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The connection of researcher to participants has had effects on the topic of study (Creswell, 2014). The views of participants and researcher had to be identified and explained because of biasness (Johnson & Christensen, 2014 & Creswell, 2014). It was difficult to apply reliability and validity to the study because the qualitative data was rooted from a single population. In addition, research findings that were discovered by the study could not be generalised. The researcher found difficulties in interpreting the data collected from audio visual material (Creswell, 2014).

The benefits associated with qualitative research method adapted from Creswell (2014):

- Researcher got direct experience with the participants
- Data was collected through different audio visual material
- Researcher was in control of the research questions
- It provided the participants an opportunity to share their experience in the research topic
- Participants could also provide the background history information in the research study.

## **3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **3.5.1 Design**

Lincoln and Denzin (2018) describe research as a “flexible set guidelines that connect theoretic paradigms strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting empirical material”. It is a plan for collecting and analysis of data (Flick, Kardoff & Steinke, 2004). Creswell (2013) explains research design as procedure in the research that involves collecting data, data analysis and report writing. It assisted the researcher to answer the research questions for the study. Mason (2002), viewed it as the assembly point that aimed to guide what the researcher was going to do to gather the evidence and which instruments the researcher was going to use to analyse the data. Yin (2011), defined research design as the structure of the study. These definitions denoted that research design structured



the starting point and finish point of the study. Additionally, it provided a general road map on how the study was conducted (Taylor, 2016).

### 3.5.2 Qualitative research design

This study focused on qualitative research design. Creswell (2013), defines qualitative research design as a system of discovering a problem and give a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon. Polit and Beck (2004) describe the process as striving for understanding. It was different from other disciplines as it gave the perspectives of participants in the study (Yin, 2011). In this study qualitative was used because it provided the in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of students' absenteeism and how it was managed in a TVET college. The incident needed to be understood as there was not much research addressing it.

### 3.5.3 Empirical research (qualitative)

Pilot and Becks (2004), assert that the researcher could gather evidence through direct or indirect experience. Yin (2011), clarified that empirical determined, how you were going to gather the data and where to get the data. Empiricism ideas is knowledge that comes from experience (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Empirical research was regarded as the proof of that the study was conducted and the experience was shared through interacting with participants. Claims were made when constructivism was compared to with other research paradigms that constructivism was the closest method in exhibiting human experience than other research paradigms (Given, 2008). Additionally, empirical evidence provided by constructivism was validated as independent because the researcher revealed the experience of the participants throughout the study.

## 3.6 RESEARCH METHODS

In qualitative research, there were several research methods that were used to collect and analyse data. Research methods were, by definition, the exact methods and procedures used to collect and analyse data (Crotty, 1998). The case study research method was used in this study.

### **3.6.1 Case Study**

Polit and Becks (2004) defined case study as an in-depth investigation of a single or small number entities. Case study method provided comprehensive understanding of single or more cases (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Neuman (2014), elucidated that case study provided in-depth understanding of the research problem or problem solving. In addition, it constructed new theories in the research problem. This study has adopted a case study method to inquire which factors influenced students' absenteeism and what strategies can be employed to deal with the challenge in the selected TVET college. Case study strategy of inquiry included interviews, documents, observations or archived records (De Vos et al, 2011). In this study, interviews and documented analysis were applied. Case study method focused in explaining why individuals thought or behaved in a particular manner. It provided the researcher with an opportunity to have understood individual feelings or emotions in the research study (Polit & Becks, 2004).

### **3.6.2 Challenges of using case study**

It was difficult to have accomplished the research objectives when a research was familiar with the emotions or feelings of the individual or group in the research topic (Polit & Becks, 2004). Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2007), Polit and Becks (2004), stated that it was a challenge to have generalised the findings of the case study method because they were generated with a small number of entities. De Vos et al (2011) described that the case study critics provided insufficient or inappropriate strategy of inquiry.

#### **3.6.2.1 Addressing challenges incurred in using a case study**

The strategies were considered in order to handle challenges of using the case study design:

- The result was not being generalised, application of generalising was made where researcher identified similarities
- The researcher interpreted data as it merged from participant's point of view
- The researcher applied transparency to check with the participants of the study the accuracy of information.

- They were prone to problems of observer bias, despite attempts made to address reflexivity mitigating

### **3.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Methodology was planned and procedures were used by the researcher to assemble the study to collect data and interpreting data that were relevant to research questions (Polit & Becks, 2004 & Creswell, 2014).

#### **3.7.1 Site**

This study was conducted in the three premises of Eastcape Midlands TVET College. The sites were situated in urban areas of Nelson Mandela Bay District, in South Africa. The first site for the study was the Business Studies campus and the second one was the Engineering campus. The third site was the head office of the above-mentioned TVET college. The researcher selected these sites because they were appropriate for the research questions stated in chapter one.

#### **3.7.2 Sampling procedure**

Neuma (2014), defines population as a group of people who have common characteristics in the research study. The study in understanding the behavior of the participants' depended on the contribution of the participants' (Given, 2008). Participants selection was made with the purpose of addressing the research questions discussed in chapter one. In the study the participants were students, lecturers and management of the TVET college in the Nelson Mandela Bay District. Leavy (2017) described sampling as the process of selecting individual from large population. Additionally, sample was the number of people that drew a data. This study made use of three students drawn from each campus which the sampling of six students, that has later formed the focus groups of two. The researcher selected lecturers that were affected by the research problem. The study gave a sampling size of six lecturers which later formed the focus groups. Each campus produced three lecturers and three students and the total number of focus groups of this study were four. One acting registrar and one student support service manager were to be recruited. The total number of the participants for this study become fourteen.

### **3.7.3 Data collection strategy**

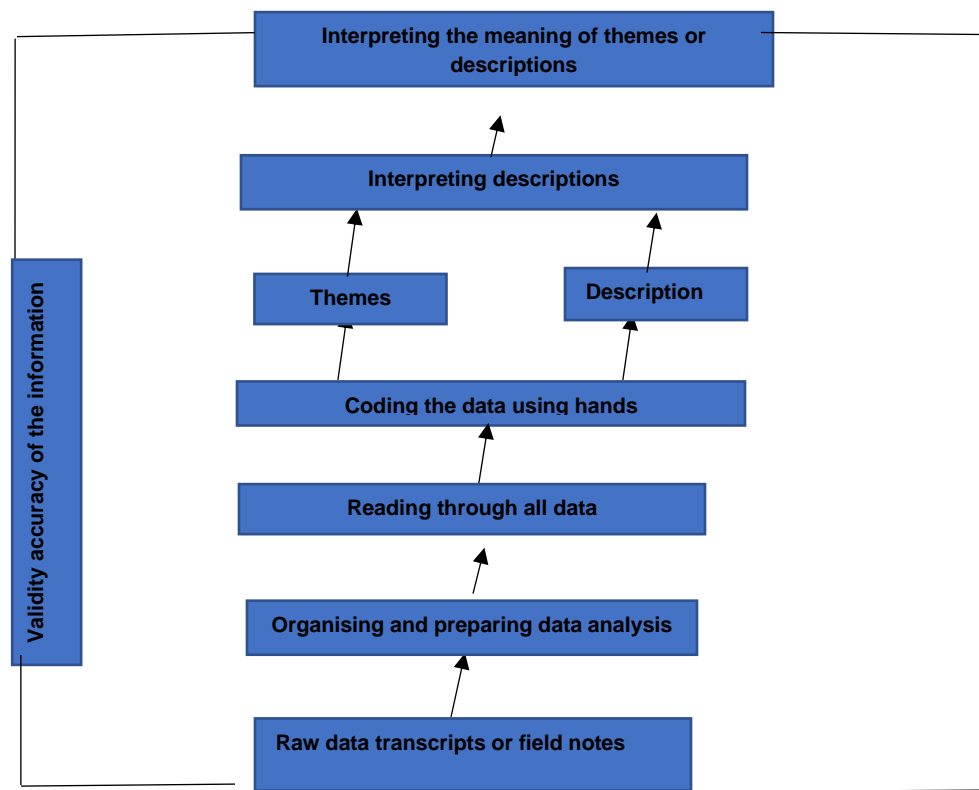
Yin (2011) describes data collection as foundation instruments for the research study. Data collections method deal with gathering information in the research study (Polit & Becks, 2004). This study made use of interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis. The study was informed by case study research and focus groups and were used because they both had characteristics of exhibiting in-depth method and nature of the study to use these mechanisms (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). In addition, they were adopted because they empowered the researcher in understanding the research. The research questions indicated in chapter one was carried through using the above methods. The researcher used the interviews and focus groups because:

- Interviews provided in depth understanding
- Participants will share their experience
- Low cost and flexible structure (Berg, 2001 & De Vos et al, 2011)
- Ideas merged from the group
- It allowed participant share different point of views in the research study.

The study has examined the official government policy, public further education and training attendance policy to determine how the factors influencing the TVET college were managed (Creswell, 2014). Documental analysis was very low in costs (De Vos et al, 2011). The researcher used tape recording and notes while interviews were conducted. These two instruments were combined during the data collection. Creswell (2014), recommended that the researcher use both, should the tape fail to function during the live interview section.

### **3.7.4 Data analysis**

Analysing qualitative data involved interpretation and attempts in understanding the subject (Mason, 2002). The researcher followed data analysis of Creswell (2014:247) comprising of six steps. Figure 3.1 below exhibits the analysis process that the researcher had proposed to follow.



Adapted from Creswell (2014:247)

**Figure 3.1 Data analysis process**

### **Step 1: Organising and preparing data**

Interviews with students, lecturers, student support service manager and academic manager were used to gather the information on the subject investigated. The researcher has transcribed tape recorded information from audio file to word document.

### **Step 2: Reading all data**

The researcher has read through transcribed data repeatedly to get a better understanding of the data.

### **Step 3: Coding of data**

Coding involved organising and labelling data into text or categories that emerged from participants (Creswell, 2014). The researcher adopted the eight steps provided by Tesch

(1990), in Creswell (2014:248). Data were assembled into categories that belonged together. In addition, data was coded based on the emerging information.

#### **Step 4: Generating a description and themes for analysis**

Creswell (2014:249) recommended that the researcher use five to seven themes in a research study. Description involved giving detailed information of people, places or events in a setting. Codes were generated with narrative information provided by participants in the study.

#### **Step 5: Presenting the themes and descriptions**

The researcher had presented findings information obtained from interviews. The findings of the research study were presented through using narrative approach.

#### **Step 6: Interpretation of data**

This was a final phase in the data analysis. The researcher has reviewed the major findings of the study. Lesson learned was focused on the main aim of the study which were exploring factors influencing students' absenteeism at TVET college and how they were managed in the Nelson Mandela Bay District. The lesson learned was discussed in the last chapter of the study.

### **3.7.5 Researcher's role**

Creswell (2014) suggested that the researcher had to follow the following obligations:

- Researcher's role was to be a partner with the population of the study.
- Researcher's responsibility was to collect data from the participants.
- Applied ethical standards in conducting the study.
- Analysed data and reported the findings of the study.

## **3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

Lincoln and Guba 1999 in De Vos et al (2011:419) believed that a research should consist of the following: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability to substantiate the accuracy of the research findings. Credibility in this study was achieved as the researcher was responsible and accountable collecting data, analysing data and reporting

research findings. In this study research findings can be transferred if they could be applied from a specific situation or similar case (De Vos et al, 2011). Dependability was achieved by reporting consistent and stable findings (Polit & Beck, 2004). Data collected from interviews was transcribed and later coded independently. The study extended conformability through capturing of participants' point of views and the researcher didn't reject what the participants were saying. Research findings were authentic when the researcher articulated the participants' point of views in the research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). In addition, the transcribe information from audio tape was audited by participants to confirm that the researcher captured what was shared on the interviews.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics were principles and guidelines that helped the researcher in conducting the research (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Yin (2011), considered that code of ethics in a research assisted the researcher to behave with integrity when conducting a research. De Vos et al (2011) viewed ethics as an indicator to deal with what was right and wrong in the research. Creswell (2014), stated that the study involving human being was important to consider principles, standards to protect the vulnerable population. In this study ethical principles and standards were discussed under the following headings:

#### **3.9.1 Ethical research phase 1 (prior to beginning the study).**

Creswell (2014), proposed that the researcher required to apply for approval to the ethical committee of the university to conduct the study. The researcher requested applied for ethical clearance certificate and followed the university application process. Ethical clearance certificate was granted (Annexure C). The researcher requested and obtained permission from the Acting deputy principal of the TVET college to conduct the study (Annexure B).

#### **3.9.2 Ethical research phase 2 (beginning the field study)**

Participants of the study were informed about the purpose of the study and its objectives (Creswell, 2014 & De Vos et al, 2011). In this study, participants were contacted and

briefed about its objectives. Participants were not forced to sign the consent form and the researcher applied the principle of voluntary to the study (Creswell,2014& Neuman,2014). The researcher was sensitive to the population of the study.

Neuman (2014) suggested the following procedure when informing the consent:

- Briefed the participants about the purpose of the study
- Disclosed any potential risk to the participants
- Assured privacy, anonymity and confidentiality
- Discussed to the participants that participation was voluntary and no action was taken or given to participants that wished to pull out from the study.
- Shared the findings of the study to participants

### **3.9.3 Ethical research phase 3 (collecting data).**

Researcher ensured that all participants in the study received the same treatment. Participants were not being deceived or misled, they were reminded about the purpose of the study. The researcher respected the premises of the organisation where the research was conducted and ensured that the settings were not disturbed (Neuman, 2014).

### **3.9.4 Ethical research phase 4 (analysing the data)**

The researcher has respected the privacy and anonymity of the participants. In addition, the researcher kept her promise to protect the names of the participants in the study. The data were narrated with honesty and the researcher was not biased when analysing data

### **3.9.5 Ethical research phase 5 (reporting, sharing and storing)**

The researcher upheld the principles of conducting research by applying honesty in reporting the findings. She has acknowledged the authors that contributed to the study by referencing and citing their work. Information that was harmful to the participants of the study was avoided. Data were shared with the participants and other stakeholders. The data of the study were kept in a safe place to avoid it to get into the wrong hands.



The researcher stored the information on her computer and the laptop has a password only known by her. Some other information was stored on a USB flash drive.

### **3.10 BENCHMARK FOR EVALUATION CRITERIA OF DISSERTATION.**

Evaluations were empowered in research study to determine the techniques and research findings through self-evaluation (Given,2008). Kistowski, Arnold, Huppler, Lange, Cao and Henning (2015) defined benchmark as standard tool for competitive and comparison evaluation of completing systems or components according to specific such as performance, dependability or security. The principle of evaluation was based on method and specific activities (Given, 2008). Benchmark seeks to confirm the interest of the participants and, validate the fairness of the researcher and provide the accuracy of the research findings (Kistowski et al,2015). Evaluation was the last stage of the dissertation assembly methods.

Kistowski et al (2015), suggested the following criteria in evaluating the dissertation:

- **Relevance:** the researcher needed to ask whether the objective and purpose of the study were achieved. The findings were matched with the objective to check relevance of the data presented through objectives. Questions that the researcher needed to ask herself was whether the data presented was close to the interests of the participants.
- **Reproducibility:** research findings was transferable when similar hypothesis was tested.
- **Fairness:** was promoted through published and compared results
- **Verifiability:** this evaluation aimed to verify how the trustworthy or variability of the study was measured through literature provided prior to the study. Kistowski et al (2015) stated that the dissertation findings were verified through peer review and other researchers testing similar hypothesis.
- **Usability:** self-validation gave the confidence the researcher to test the accuracy of results after data analysis and interpretation was conducted.

### **3.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on the methodology that was used in this study. Explanation of qualitative researcher as a method for data collection and analysis was provided. The data collection measures were discussed in this chapter. Information about population and site was given. Ethical principles in this chapter were given. The next chapter discusses data analysis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **D DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, the research design and methodology used for the study were discussed. The selection of instruments for data collection was explained. This chapter focuses on data analysis and presentation of the findings. This study attempted to investigate factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District and also recommended strategies to deal with challenges.

The main research question was: Which factors are influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET College in Nelson Mandela Bay District and which strategies can be recommended to deal with the challenge? The sub questions were as follows:

- What do students perceive as factors that affect their class attendance?
- What are the challenges posed by student absenteeism to the college management and lecturers?
- What kind of measures are in place to deal with factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District?
- What strategies can be recommended to deal with factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District?

#### **4.2 BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

The total number of participants involved in this study were fourteen, in terms of the biography information below. Table 4.1 lists participants' information of the lecturers including pseudonym, programme and teaching experience. Lecturers who are responsible in teaching NCV students from level 2 to level 4. The second table 4.2 indicates the students' information including pseudonym, gender, programme and level. This include six NCV programme students from level 2 and level 4

Lastly, table 4.3 lists the information of the college management participants including pseudonym, responsibilities and service experience. Two management participants were involved in this study. Participants name were concealed according to the information shared in the biographic information.

**Table 4.1: Biographic information of lecturers**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Teaching experience</b>
Lecturer 1	LEC1	Marketing	11years
Lecturer 2	LEC2	Tourism	10 years
Lecturer 3	LEC3	Finance	9 years
Lecture 4	LEC4	Electrical engineering	8 years
Lecturer 5	LEC5	Mathematics	6 years
Lecturer 6	LEC 6	Information Technology	7 years

**Table 4.2: Biographic information of students**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>NCV Programme</b>	<b>Level</b>
Student 1	STU 1	Female	Tourism	2
Student 2	STU 2	Female	Tourism	2
Student 3	STU 3	Female	Tourism	2
Student 4	STU 4	Male	Electrical engineering	4

Student 5	STU 5	Female	Electrical engineering	4
Student 6	STU 6	Male	Electrical engineering	4

**Table 4.3: Biographic information of college management respectively**

Participants	Pseudonym	Responsibility	Service experience
Student support service manager	SSS	Assists needy students to acquire bursaries NFSAS and other stakeholder bursaries.	2 years
Acting registrar	ACR	Student support, lecturer exams and assessment	2 years

### **4.3 EMERGENT THEMES**

The research questions, themes and sub-themes are illustrated in Table 4.4 followed by a comprehensive explanation. This study comprises of four themes formulated from research questions. The interview data were collected from three lecturers per campus, three students from each campus and including SSS manager and acting registrar of the institution. Lecturer and student participants were sampled from Business Studies and Engineering campuses offering NC(V). management participants were sampled from head office of the institution. Participants were asked questions according to semi structured interview schedules (see annexure E, F, G, H). Interviews were recorded with the approval of the participants. Data collected through audio recording, were later transcribed. The views of the participants are cited in *italic* to provide the evidence.

**Table 4.4: Research questions, themes and sub-themes**

<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub themes</b>
1. What do students perceive as factors that affect their class attendance?	4.3.1 <b>Theme 1:</b> Factors influencing students' absenteeism	4.3.1.1 Transport issue  4.3.1.2 Family background issue  4.3.1.3 NSFAS as contributing factor  4.3.1.4 Personal factor as contributing  4.3.1.5 Student related factor  4.3.1.6 Disliking the course  4.3.1.7 College related issue  4.3.1.8 Issues with lecturers
2. What are the challenges student absenteeism pose to the college management and lecturers?	4.3.2 <b>Theme 2:</b> Challenges posed by students' absenteeism to lecturers and management.	4.3.2.1 Lesson planning of a lecturer  4.3.2.2 Students performance  4.3.2.3 Lack of support from college management to lecturers
3. What kind of measures are in place to manage factors that influencing students'	4.3.3 <b>Theme 3:</b> Measures in place to manage factors that influence student absenteeism.	4.3.3.1 Tracking system as managing tool.  4.3.3.2 Attendance policy as managing tool.

absenteeism at a TVET College in Nelson Mandela Bay District?		
4. What strategies TVET College can engage in managing poor absenteeism of students?	4.3.4 <b>Theme 4:</b> Strategies to manage and reduce students' absenteeism.	4.3.4.1 Attendance timetable of students.  4.3.4.2 Support for lecturers  4.3.4.3 Students support service.  4.3.4.4 Transport for students.  4.3.4.5 Accommodation for students.  4.3.4.6 NSFAS allowance  4.3.4.7 Extra mural activities.

#### **4.3.1 Theme 1: Factors influencing students' absenteeism**

During the interviews the participants shared factors influencing students' absenteeism at TVET college which included, amongst others, the following: transport issues, family background issues, NSFAS allowances, personal factors, disliking the course, college and lecturers related issues.

##### **4.3.1.1 Transport issues.**

From the interviews sessions it was reported that transport was the major factor that contribute to student's attendance. The majority of students stay in townships that are far

from the campuses and at times they would arrive late because they would not get transport that goes in their direction. That mostly that affects their first periods in the timetable for the day. Students further revealed that they couldn't afford transport costs. Students said that:

*Sometimes I would have problem with my transport because I have to have money every day to come to college (STU 2).*

*First students tend to be absent because of transport, you will arrive at college the period is nearly to end or you are left with thirty minutes then you decide that I must stay outside until the period ends (STU 4).*

Lecturers concurred that students are struggling to attend on regular basis due to transport issues. Attendance is compromised when transport is so expensive and students would come and at times they don't come to classes due to lack of transport fare. Some lecturers said:

*The taxi fare is the last item of their budget because they first have to purchase food and if the money is finished, they stay at home up until grandparent gets paid the social grant (LEC 1).*

*So, the factor is money, we can couple that to transport as well because transport requires money (LEC 4).*

Student support service manager also highlighted that students use more than one transport mode and that puts a financial strain to students:

*There are no taxis that come directly to the college and as result, students use plus or minus three taxis that go to that particular campus (SSS).*

The SSS further said:

*We are currently experiencing student unrest at the moment and one of the reasons to have this unrest is because of financial challenges and students are unable to attend classes and this is across the college.*



It seems that transport was the major challenge which impacted on student attendance. Students could not afford transport costs as they travel every day. The late arrival of students to college due to transport issues resulted on partial attendance because the students would not be absent from all the scheduled classes, however, would miss certain classes. The late arrival or partial attendance to class is regarded as unauthorised absence as stipulated in the DHET attendance policy. Students on regular basis arrive late for classes at TVET college in the Nelson Mandela Bay District that result in them missing the first periods for the day and recorded as absent for those periods missed. College attendance is measured or monitored per period that the student attended and if a student arrived during the second period the first period that she or he missed is marked absent.

#### 4.3.1.2 Family background issues.

Data that emerged from the interviews with lecturer participants revealed that a student's family background does influence student attendance. Lecturers reported during interview session that students who are fostered by grandparents wouldn't come regularly as expected because they are living through social grants and alluded that parents' employment status play a major role in student attendance. Lecturers had this to say:

*The majority of our students come from poor backgrounds, and you will find a situation where that both parents are unemployed and depended on social grant of the grandmother. Then they get the social grant obvious on the 1st of each month so maybe they might be able to come to college for the first week (LEC 2)*

*Personally, I think its starts where they come from because if let say a student that we have enrolled for one of our programs and that the student comes from poor background her parent is not working and they depending on social grant of the grandmother (LEC 1)*

*Looking at the demographic background of our students mostly that we enroll are coming from poor background (LEC 4)*

Lecturer 4 further said:

*You will get a parent who is a seasonal worker or doesn't work at all depending on social grant.*

Students' confirms that coming from a family that depends on social grant or pension becomes a struggle to attend classes. One student said:

*My mother and father are not working, and they are depending on a social grant fund (STU 2).*

It became evident that the parents' employment status of the students has great influence in students' attendance. Students could not afford education costs because of their parents that are not working and others are fostered by grandparents who depended on social grants. When situations at home are not looking good due to financial constraints the primary thing for a family is to buy food and rest can be provided unless there is money left. In such cases attendance is compromised due to unaffordability of students.

#### 4.3.1.3 NSFAS allowance as contributing factor.

Students, lecturers and SSS manager participants highlighted that NSFAS allowance was a major factor contributing to students' absenteeism at the college. It was reported from interviews that majority of students are funded by NSFAS bursary allowance which pays tuition and other expenses for students and in the case of TVET college NSFAS pays travelling costs and accommodation for students. The payment process of travelling allowances for students is reportedly flawed and payments are made late to students. Students depend on NSFAS allowance especially those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds to cover travel costs. When payments are made late by two to three months this further contributes to students' absenteeism and disqualify students from receiving NSFAS allowance because they cannot obtain the minimum attendance in order for them to qualify for NSFAS allowance. Lecturers commented:

*I would say its money that come to college and they don't get their allowances monthly and they don't even get the allowance (LEC 5).*

*I think the timing of NSFAS allowance is frustrates students, remember for them to be able to come they must be paid the travel allowance and if it is paid late, obviously they will not be able to attend classes (LEC 3).*

Lecturer 3 further said:

*Also, to be able to qualify for travel allowance student must meet the eighty percent attendance of DHET policy, it is very difficult for them to meet eighty percent requirement if they don't come to college.*

Students from both campuses shared their frustrations on how the NSFAS allowance bursary is handled by the college management and they believe that if payments could be made on time that could control attendance. They shared their frustrations that there were some months that they did not qualify to get allowance due to poor attendance. Students have this to say about bursary allowance:

*I'm not receiving NSFAS every month, I did receive it and it was only for the month of June (STU 2).*

*It's so demotivating because the manner they answer students about NSFAS or bursary sometimes is not professional there are no clear answers as to what is happening about students' allowance and that it impacts on students' attendance (STU 6).*

*We are supposed to get the allowance at the end of each month but it can skip two months not getting (STU 4).*

Student 4 further added:

*Then the time when we have to claim sometimes you pass by SSS office and you notice that there is a list that wasn't even announced to students that on a certain day that students should claim maybe you were going to the toilets and saw this list that there is my name that end up disrupting you not returning to the class because you have to collect bank statement and other documents and sometimes when they put the list four days left to submit your claim.*

The SSS manager added that NSFAS allowances' late payments is the reasons why students are not attending classes and further indicated that the college classes were disrupted by students' unrests due to outstanding payments. She said:

*They are not getting their allowances on time and that is why they took a stance to have this unrest (SSS).*

However, the acting registrar disagreed that NSFAS or bursary allowances has an influence on students' attendance. He finds no link as he claims that students would receive the payments and still not attend classes. He said that:

*They would mention the issue of bursary most of them would use the issue of bursary even though when you look at whether this really would be the case there is no link per se, there are students who would get the bursary on Monday but the whole week they would be absent then that shouldn't be the case (ACR).*

Examining the comments made by participants it appears that NSFAS was a major factor that contributed to students' absenteeism. The manner in which the college conducted or handled the NSFAS payments process was the cause of students' absenteeism as it appeared that students cannot afford the educational costs. This process frustrated students up to the point where they shut down the college as they demanded their allowances to be paid immediately. Different views were shared by the two managers whether NSFAS was the contributing factor towards students' absenteeism. DHET guidelines state that students who do not meet the eighty percent attendance level should be excluded, and the college applies that rule when dispensing NSFAS allowances to students.

#### 4.3.1.4 Personal factor as contributing factor

Data gathered from participants of this study revealed that personal issues of the students influenced in students' attendance. One student cited that her personal problems affects her class attendance because she is taking care of a family member. She said:

*What prevents me from attending are personal problems at home and sometimes I have to take my granny to clinic if my uncle is out of town or sometimes if I don't have someone*

*to look after my child since our school clutching with school date like he will be on holiday I won't have any one to look after him then I will have to stay at home to look after him myself (STU 1)*

The SSS manager reported that students are dealing with personal issues which at times require the attention of a psychologist. She said:

*Students have personal issues where some of them have been reported by psychological intern and student liaison officer (SSS)*

*She further added that:*

*Those cases are ranging from physical abuse all different kind of abuses like physical, emotional, sexual abuses so you will find that students are unable to attend because of such they need social service to report these and end up going to the clinic.*

On the other hand, a lecturer indicated that drugs and gangsterism have an effect on students' absenteeism. He said:

*I got cases were students stay away because of drugs and also gang related. I have discovered recently that one of our students is a gang member and to come to the college is also an issue (LEC 2)*

*He further added that:*

*There was one student from tourism programme who couldn't come to college because there is someone who is threatening her safety, so she actually decided she will only come during tests series because she feels safe at home.*

From the comments of the interviews it became evident that students are dealing with issues that affect them personally to such an extent that they affect their class attendance. However, the college does offer support service for students who are dealing with personal issues. Even though it appears that the college does not have a qualified psychologist on site they tried to have phycologist interns to assists the students.

#### 4.3.1.5 Student related factor

Data that emerged from interviews sessions with participants indicated that students' illness was the cause of students' absenteeism. One student shared that she cannot attend classes when she is sick. The student said:

*I sometimes get sick and as a result I can't come to college (STU 3)*

It appeared that the absence of some students are related to illness. Student reported that sometimes they do report their absence to the SSS division when they are back from being absent. Students said:

*Sometimes I will be honest when I have visited the doctor and gets the doctors letter then I will submit the certificate but in most case don't report my absence (STU 5).*

*Sometimes I report because I have a son that sometimes I take to the doctor when he is sick. I will receive a sick note then I will take to the college allow all lecturers to sign stating that I was absent and sometimes I don't report (STU 6).*

Another student was blunt to say he does not report his absence. He said:

*No, I don't report my absence (STU 4).*

One lecturer confirmed that when students are ill they stay at home. He said:

*When the student is very sick don't come to the college (LEC 2)*

The SSS manager highlighted that students become absent from college because they need to visit health facility care. She said:

*The college doesn't have the health service that is another reason student are absent.*

From the participants comments it became evident that student illness impacts on student attendance. When students are sick they tend to stay at home or visit healthcare facilities and they do not report their absence in advance they wait until their return to the college. Sometimes they would report only if they have proof or evidence like a medical certificate. It appeared that the students are not well informed that they should report their absence

to the SSS division whether they have proof or not. DHET attendance policy states that students should report his or her absence and any absence reported after being absent is treated as unauthorised absence.

#### 4.3.1.6 Disliking the course.

The lack of interest in the course students enrolled for seemed to be the contributing factors on students' absenteeism. Lecturers indicated that the student become demotivated or disliking the course they have enrolled for and sometimes they discovered that they do not like the course after they have enrolled. Lecturers had this to say:

*Some of them when they come to college they have certain expectations about the programs, it is when they enrolled they realised that this course is not for me and that takes away the desire to come to college and you will see them duck and diving (LEC 2)*

*They come to apply just for the sake of studying to the college, what they do they apply for IT or electrical now when they go to classes they realised that this is not for me that makes them to bunk and at the end of the day they dropout (LEC 6).*

Another lecturer added that students enrolled at the college without having proper knowledge what the course is all about and they are influenced by the demand of job opportunities when they do the selection of course.

*Again, subject choice, student come to study because they see there are more people that are hired in electrical engineering sector (LEC 4)*

The information shared from interviews revealed that some students enrolled for some courses without having a proper knowledge of what the course is all about and when they realised that the course is not what they thought they started to lose the interest. When that happens the importance of attending classes becomes not a priority anymore to the point that student would have a high absenteeism or dropout.

#### 4.3.1.7 College-related issue

It became apparent during the interview that when students choose a TVET college after leaving the matric route they labored under the impression that they will be exposed to

both practical and theoretical component of the course. When these expectations are not met students start to get bored. This is what one lecturer said:

*We don't teach them according to how they want to learn, students are more practical they want to touch and feel but then we still stuck up in the old way of teaching which doesn't speak to their learning needs (LEC 2).*

Lecturer 2 further said that:

*When that happens, they start to de-register and they lose interest of the course because we don't meet their learning needs hence they will start to dropout and bunk classes.*

Another lecturer talked about how students are treated at the TVET college like they are still at DBE system and they are learning the theory component of the course. He reported:

*When they get here it is more like they are in high school there is not much difference where they supposed to be if you are talking about basic education and technical college there is more practical's (LEC 3).*

Students' expectations and demands are more important. Retention of students in the institution is highly depending on the number of students completing a course or programme. It appeared that students' expectation were not meet by the college and that students lost interest in the course. Students are aware that there is a difference between DBE and DHET systems; hence they choose TVET college to acquire practical skills. It looks like the college lacks resource to cater for practical component of the study.

#### 4.3.1.8 Issues with Lecturers

During the interviews it emerged that lecturers are the deep roots of students' absenteeism. At times they do not arrive on time to classes, and sometimes they do not attend classes at all. This demotivate students from attending classes because they know that they will not be any learning to those classes that have lecturers who constantly not pitching for classes. Students mentioned that:



*In some classes you will attend there is no lecturer or they will give us the register to sign or maybe they are busy with something else or they had to rush somewhere (STU 2).*

*You will find out that the lecturer is not there so you decide to be absent in that particular class or when we don't do anything that is off importance so I decide not to come (STU 5).*

*You will come to class bring all your textbooks then there will be no lecturer and then the following day you decide I'm not bringing the textbooks because I know the lecturer is not going to be in class, then you don't bring the textbook you will be sent out of class. Then you decide that I don't want to attend that class I rather sit out of class (STU 1)*

Another student complained that lecturers do not respect them and they do not adhere to professionalism when speaking to students. He said:

*At this level of institution, you are expecting a lot from management and lecturers you are embarrassed or demotivated sometimes the way lecturers speak to you and worse I'm an emotional person and sometimes a lecturer says something that would make you angry then I would decide let me not be on his or her face for a while and I would not attend classes that on its own makes me not to perform (STU 6).*

SSS manager established that students feel demotivated and they are wasting their time to come to college when lecturers are constantly absent. She said:

*Teaching and learning had been a challenge because of lecturers' absenteeism, and students feel that they are wasting their time and money to come to that particular campus.*

Lecturers should be setting an example with the issue of attendance and arrive in classes on time. Students would not take lecturers seriously when they stressing and addressing the importance of attendance and late arrival of students because they are not applying those guidelines. Lecturers play a vital role in student life and students are looking up to them for inspiration however when a lecturer does not show respect towards student and humiliate him or her in front of the other students. A student tends to develop an attitude towards the particular lecturer and decides not to attend classes of that lecturer which

contributes to students' absenteeism and partly absence student would attend selectively because of the relationship they have with the lecturer.

#### **4.3.2 Theme 2: Challenges posed by students' absenteeism to lecturers and management.**

During the interviews, it became evident that lecturers are experiencing challenges with students' absenteeism. Their challenges include lesson planning of a lecturer, student performance and lack of support from college management to lecturers.

##### **4.3.2.1 Lesson planning of a lecturer.**

Lecturers complained that their teaching plan gets disrupted by students' absenteeism. They shared their frustrations that it is hard to complete the syllabus because of daily lessons that are interrupted due to the high number of students' absenteeism. When such circumstances occur lecturers ended up not completing the syllabus and that impact on students' performance. This what the lecturers said:

*Student absenteeism does affect our planning a lot and when you do planning, you attempt to spread the time for syllabus and in between you slot in other activities (LEC 1).*

*I always get good results I don't know this year and for years I have never been in a position where I don't get the opportunity to complete the syllabus but this year I don't think I will be able to complete the syllabus (LEC 3)*

*Lecturer 3 further said that:*

*I am looking for short cuts and then my planning gets to be disrupted all the time, it is a mess this year.*

Another lecturer added that it is not easy to carry on with the lesson while students are struggling to grasp the topic discussed and he tried to bridge a gap by repeating the topic that could not be covered due to students' absenteeism. This is what he said:

*If you are having students in class, you might go ahead with your plan but then when you are lecturer by default you become a parent and then when you see that the students are*

*struggling it is very difficult to move forward with the lesson as you know that most students are behind with the lesson obviously you will go back (LEC 6).*

Repeating a lesson demotivates other students that are regularly attending classes and it is easy to those who are constantly attending classes to follow the behavior of absconders. It's sends the message to students that a lecturer will repeat the work that they had missed while they were absent.

*Doing so you will find that some other days you with those five students they will complain that no meneer there is no use for us to go ahead with the lecture we know that others will come and you will go back again teach the same thing (LEC 6).*

*When they see that there are few students they won't come to class even though they will be in campus because they know that there is not much is going to happen in class because you are not going to teach in the same rate or in same pace that you normal teach when there is full class (LEC 4).*

From the comments of the lecturers it became evident that students' absenteeism pose challenges to their teaching plan. Students are not attending classes regularly as expected. Students' absenteeism creates difficulties for lecturers to complete scheduled lessons or the curriculum on time. Lecturers complained that they are struggling to complete the syllabus because sometimes they repeat the lesson for students who were absent. As much as the lecturers would want to carry on to the next topic sometimes, they found themselves repeating because student can't comprehend the new topic as it connects from the previous lesson. While bridging the gap or repeating the topic for absentees and students who are constantly attending they feel demotivated. At times they do not want to learn because they already know that lesson is going to be repeated when there is full attendance.

#### 4.3.2.2 Student performance

Lecturers also complained that students who don't attend classes regularly cannot cope or grasp the content of the subject. They explained that the reason why students could

not cope with the content, it is because a lesson is built from the previous lesson or chapter. Lecturers said:

*If you miss two days in the engineering field that's a lot, it is not like when you are doing history or commerce subject (LEC 4).*

Lecturer 4 further said:

*I start with the previous lesson by polishing the pieces in order for me to get to the next lesson they might hear a thing or two but because the two classes that they have missed created a gap that can't be filled unless if extra classes are organized.*

*They normally fail math's because first a student must be taught and then they must do other activities most students who don't come to classes they simple fail however, there are those who can study on their own though they are few but most of them fail a lot (LEC 5).*

Another lecturer indicated that some students can miss classes but still catch up on their own and perform good. He said:

*There are those who don't attend but they can easily grasp the content and perform well (LEC 6).*

The study's findings also revealed that students perform poorly because some have outstanding assessments. Students would not submit assessments because of poor attendance and as a results they automatically become excluded to seat for final examinations because they might not have a year mark. And this is what one lecturer said:

*Like this student who is a gang member he is not doing very well academically, and his assessments are outstanding there was a point where I had to go to his home to drop the assessments. I had to ask his parents to assist him with his Integrated summative assessment tasks (ISAT) because I don't see him at the college (LEC 2).*

Students contracted that absenteeism affects their academic performance because most information of the subject is discussed while they are absent. Poor attendance deprived

students' opportunity to pose questions and get clarity in the topic discussed and students struggles to understand certain concepts. Students commented as follows:

*Electronic control and digital electronics (ECD), involve programing and it's difficult for example like traffic lights for it to go red, orange or green it needs us to programme it for certain time like after five minutes that it has to go green so you need to be there beside the theoretical part like practical's part is very important its where you get to have gist of the subject (STU 5).*

*They are busy with certain topic and you are not there to understand what the lecturer is explaining now you have to go back home and try on your own but still there is a question you don't understand (STU 2).*

Attendance plays an important role in students' achievement. Poor attendance impacts negatively on the performance of the students. In addition, lecturers alluded that if a student misses two or more lessons on critical subjects that create a gap that cannot be bridged not unless such student gets extra classes. Students' absenteeism has negative impact on lecturers pass rate including the college pass rate. This study discovered that students' absenteeism does not only affect student performance, also student would have outstanding assessments that were conducted while absent. It seems that lecturers had a burden of assessing the students that had outstanding assessment that pose threat to the lecturers. The student participants confirmed that missing a class deprived them opportunity to discuss the topic and clear the confusion around discussed topic.

#### 4.3.2.3 Lack of support from college management to lecturers

Lecturers also complained that they don't receive any support from management of the college. Management support is very imperative when dealing with delicate matters and having no support from your heads demotivates lecturers. Lecturers commented:

*We don't receive support instead we are being told what to do. It is like it's been thrown back at us at campuses that you are the one dealing with students then manage the situation but when we try to manage the situation they are not doing their part like if they were giving these students their allowance on time (LEC 1).*

*We don't receive support from management we just deal with issues on our own at times and there is nothing we are getting from the management (LEC 6).*

*Management turn to distance themselves on things that are burning (LEC 4).*

Student support service manager also confirmed that they don't give support to lecturers and they don't have support system for lecturers to deal with student absenteeism. And this is what she said:

*We don't have support for lecturers to deal with student absenteeism (SSS).*

A lecturer expressed the frustration of not receiving the support from management during academic meetings and that the management do not want to hear the excuses that are related to students' absenteeism. Lecturers feel under pressure as they do not have any reasons besides non-attendance of students. One lecturer said:

*You will say that student didn't perform because of attendance they come and say you are chewing water that is not the reason come up with the reasons. The reason that they wanted is for you to come up and say I am the one at fault I didn't do my work (LEC 4).*

Management support is important in an organisation. The lack of support service from the management to lecturers might exacerbate the issue of students' absenteeism. In addition, it may also happen that lecturers loose interest in dealing with student attendance because of the lack of support from management. In academic meetings lecturers are denied to use students' absenteeism as the reason for non-performance of the students. In such cases where a college or campus is faced with students' absenteeism the college management should be visible to give directive on to how to manage and support the lecturers in dealing with the issue at hand.

#### **4.3.3 Theme3: Measures in place to manage factors influencing student absenteeism.**

Findings of this study revealed that the college uses the tracking system and attendance policy to manage students' attendance.

#### 4.3.3.1 Tracking system as managing tool

The findings of the study indicated that a tracking system is used to track students who are not attending classes regularly. Lecturers are put in charge to identify students who have a pattern of absenteeism and the names of such students are given to students support office to do the tracking. According to the information shared tracking is normally done to a student that has missed two or more days. The tracking system may seem as a great tool in dealing with students' absenteeism, however, with cases such as student missing a day in college that system will not be used. Through tracking system, the college is able to know what prevents student from coming to college and offer assistance where they can. Lecturer and SSS manager concurred as follows:

*Currently we have a tracking system where a lecturer would identify student that have not been to class but the indicator would be as we are dealing with 30 students in class multiple by five you won't be able track students that have been absent for a day (LEC 4).*

*We do the tracking of the students and they fill in a form where you get the reason why the student is not attending (SSS).*

Through the tracking system, students were helped and referred to a psychologist. The SSS manager and lecturer participant said:

*If it is a reason that requires that student to be referred to psychological for example or social worker, then we take step of referring to such services. Unfortunately, college doesn't have psychology services we do have psychologist that we refer students too via supply chain process(SSS).*

*There are students that I have referred to psychologist intern for personal problems where they were council others were referred to social workers and others were taken to hospital and clinic (LEC2).*

The tracking system becomes unsuccessful when student liaison officers of the college don't perform their duties. When student liaison officers fail to produce a comprehensive report about the details of students cannot be serviced. The key reason students are

tracked is to ensure they get the support and to know if they are still coming or not to college. Student support service manager cited that she receives incomplete information:

*Student liaison officers some of them are not playing their part when it comes to student attendance because you will find that they are not doing the tracking that they supposed to do as student liaison officers or you will find incomplete or incorrect information were as the reality is much than the information you have received. You will find that student have not been attending for a month for example and no tracking has been done to know what happened to the student (SSS).*

The tracking system assists in managing students' absenteeism; students were offered support service. However, the success of tracking system at this TVET college was hard to measure due to non-compliance from student liaison officers who couldn't perform their duties to track students. The tracking system was successful to those campuses that student liaison officers performed their duties and submitted comprehensive report of the students. The SSS manager depends on the monthly reports sent by student liaison officers to make recommendations for the students to be referred to a psychologist. The key reason students are tracked is to ensure that students receive all the support from the college.

#### 4.3.3.2 Attendance policy as managing tool

Data that emerged from the interviews revealed that the college uses DHET attendance policy and NSFAS guidelines to manage students' attendance. The college management cited that the college have a policy to manage students' absenteeism and this what they said:

*We are relying on the DHET policy and NSFAS guideline, what we have done we source out the policy review process whereby we were assisted in reviewing the current policy and we requested the facilitator to draw for us (SSS).*

*It is attendance policy of DHET (ACR).*



He further said:

*The eighty percent attendance is more of national even the students are made to sign as acknowledgement (ACR).*

Students' participants indicated that they are aware of the attendance policy and how it is applicable to them. Students said:

*It says if you don't meet eighty percent of the attendance you won't write final exams (STU 4).*

*It says if you don't attend classes eighty percent of the time then you lose the allowance that what it says (STU 5).*

*I should come to college daily and being in to your all classes (STU 1).*

The attendance policy seemed not to be an effective tool in managing students' absenteeism at the TVET college. Attendance policy only provides a directive how it should be implemented. The challenges raised when the guidelines are not fully implemented. Management participants commented:

*I think the policies on its own is effective but as I said it depends on whether it or not I think that we have been implementing policies and also we have different managers who would make sure that policies are followed (ACR).*

*Yes, they are effective because you will find out that student at the year will be refused to write exams based on their poor attendance and I would say in this regard it is effective but it is not assisting during the year (SSS).*

She further said that:

*Students are refused based on absenteeism but in certain campuses not all campuses are complying to DHET policy.*

Lecturing participants' views are that the college has no control measure in managing students' attendance. It seems that college management implement attendance policy to discipline the students instead of assisting them. Lecturers commented:

*There are no proper measures to control this absenteeism, what the college does it punishes the students if they don't attend classes by not receiving the NSFAS allowance or do not write exams (LEC 5).*

*Sometimes they are excluded to write the final exams based on the attendance however NFSAS allowance is fully applied the performance part sometimes is we implement it and sometimes not but bursary is fully implemented (LEC 4)*

*These are the only two we have the eighty percent and you should be in class eighty percent of the time and if you don't reach eighty percent in a particular subject you will not write the exams at the end of the year and if you don't attend eighty percent of your classes you won't get the allowance (LEC 6)*

Student participants expressed similar views as of the lecturer participants that when they don't meet the eighty percent attendance they don't receive their travel allowance for a particular month. Students said:

*I didn't receive the travel allowance of the month of July when I went to the office to check they said I didn't meet eight percent attendance (STU 3).*

*If your attendance is low, you lose your bursary so if you attend chances are that your allowance would be higher (STU 6).*

*I was in hospital and I had a proof that I was in hospital I went to SSS office why I didn't receive my allowance they said my attendance was poor but I did have a proof (STU 2).*

The attendance policy is the directive of DHET to TVET colleges to manage students' attendance. The college seems to be focusing on the eight percent attendance guideline on the attendance policy leaving out the other guidelines which instruct that student whose attendance is below eighty percent should be excluded from seating for final

examination. The attendance policy was not implemented properly by the college and to determine whether the attendance policy is an effective tool it is quite difficult to affirm.

Management participants reported that the DHET attendance policy is not effective because other campuses within the college do not exclude students based on poor attendance to seat for final exams and the non-compliance to the guidelines may have contributed to students' absenteeism. In addition, some students may get away with the poor attendance as they are financed by their parents therefore if the policy is partially implemented that would leave a gap of not being able to address the issue of poor attendance. From the lecturers, they viewed this as a way in which the management punishes the students from receiving NSFAS allowance. Despite the fact that students are aware of the attendance policy and the guidelines, their attendance was reported poor.

#### **4.3.4 Theme 4: Strategies to manage and reduce students' absenteeism**

Participants of this study suggested the following strategies that may be employed to reduce students' absenteeism, attendance timetable for students, support for lecturers, student support services, transport for students, accommodation for students, NSFAS allowance and extra mural activities can be applied in stimulate students' attendance.

##### **4.3.4.1 Attendance timetable of students.**

Lecturer and SSS manager responses were based on the students' attendance timetable, that the timetable can play a vital role in improving students' attendance. They cited that the timetable needs to be revised because students become exhausted to attend seven periods a day:

*if they can change the timetable our timetable doesn't give space for students and it is exhausting to start from eight o'clock to three o'clock (LEC 1).*

*If we could get the timetable right, then we can succeed on this poor attendance (SSS).*

She further said:

*Academically we can improve on timetable because I believe that the timetable that we are using is not conducive for teaching and learning because student attend in the morning from eight o'clock and only stop during break which is short break in between we expect student to have activities and submit assignments. We don't encourage them for study groups where they can have their own sessions, study as peers, you see our timetable needs to be revised.*

Lecturer and SSS manager participants raised an interesting point that student attendance timetable should be revised. They believed that by so doing, students' attendance would improve. It was reported that students become exhausted with the current timetable that they are running from eight o'clock to three o'clock. It appears that the new proposed timetable would allow students to have time to do other activities such as assignments and class activities in between and improve academic performance.

#### 4.3.4.2 Support for lecturers

Lecturers emphasised that students' absenteeism can be managed if they could get the management support. They cannot go an extra mile for the college when they still have outstanding human resource issues that have not been resolved and not valued by the management lecturers said:

*Staff morale is very low here and in most cases staff would say they will never do what he is doing like going an extra mile by visiting home of certain students (LEC 3).*

Lecturer 3 further added:

*I'm not appreciated enough to go an extra mile for the college because of many various reasons that I feel that they should be happening like unfairness of the money due to us that you have to fight for petty things that demoralised you to an extent of saying I don't care about the college anymore let me just do what I'm employed for and stop that shouldn't be the case.*

*If management was doing their job in engaging lecturers and students this student absenteeism would have been better managed (LEC 4).*

*If they can offer support to lecturers in terms of dealing with absenteeism putting things into place (LEC 2).*

The acting registrar believes that lecturers can help to reduce students' absenteeism as they are the ones dealing with students on a daily basis. He said that:

*I think the person who is always in contact with the students is the lecturer and if we could build relationship between a lecturers and students so that a lecturer doesn't get tired of calling a student who is developing a particular trend and seat down with the student because you will find a student would open more to a lecturer than the student would go to SSS or someone else.*

*He added:*

*I think lecturers can also play a big role and building that relationship but for that to happen the relationships that the college has with lecturers has to be such that a lecturer can eagerly do that without feeling as if it's being burdened.*

Lecturers emphasised that they cannot put an extra effort on the college affairs as they feel that their human resource matters are not resolved. It was mentioned that the staff morale was very low due to non-support from management and their moneys which are outstanding, they feel they are unimportant to the college management yet they want their assistance. In addition, the relationship of the management and college staff was reported that it wasn't good and it seemed that the lecturers have lost trust and faith in the college management. If relationships between the management and lecturers specific could improve they would be able to engaged and come with solutions on students' absenteeism.

#### 4.3.4.3 Student support service

Student support service manager and student cited that the college can improve if they could have healthcare facility and psychologist on site. They said:

*If we could offer services that the students are normally require like the health care service that we don't have at campuses that can also improve attendance in this health service*

*and we could also have the college psychologist where they don't have to go outside the campuses to attend to these services (SSS).*

*I would make sure we have councillors and social workers that constantly monitor student ability like we have develop a group from level 3 to assists each other by identifying each other problem (STU 6).*

It looks like the healthcare facility is the major challenge that the college need to address in order to offer support services to students. SSS manager believed that if they could have clinic within the institution they would be able to assist students and extend their services in supporting students by employing a qualified psychologist. It seems that the students have been carrying one another's social problems due to the lack of psychological service at the college.

#### 4.3.4.4 Transport for students

Most students are using bus to come to the college, lecturers and students concurred that the management can provide transport for students that can stimulate attendance of the students. They further suggested that if the management can negotiate with bus companies the schedules and the stops of the students that students won't feel the pressure to leave the campuses before the college day ends. They said:

*The government has to intervene like the buses that stops far where you stay, the college ends at 14:55 but the bus leaves at 15:00 just imagine that you have to make it for 15: 00 to terminus it is like thirty minutes or twenty from here it depends and sometimes you get there the bus has left (STU 4).*

He further added:

*The bus route has to accommodate students like the way I see the buses are scheduled according to workers' hours not according to the hours of the students.*

*Go to buses and negotiate if the student has a student card they must pay five rand instead of paying ten rand why should a student pay a bus ticket same as person who is working make sure that the times are conducive for students. Our students knock off at*

*three o'clock and the bus leave at three o'clock they have to cut the period and not attend the last period to chase the bus if they don't catch that the next bus would be at five o'clock (LEC 4).*

Transport is the major issue that affects students' attendance and it was proposed by the participants that that college and government should intervene or negotiate with bus companies in the Nelson Mandela Bay District on the bus schedules and introduce stops in the township where students would be pick up and drop off, to eliminate the transport issues. It gives the impression that the students are relying on the buses to come to the college.

#### 4.3.4.5 Accommodation for students

Participants believed that if the college could have accommodation that will assist in reducing and managing student absenteeism. One lecturer and student stated:

*We need accommodation that accommodation must be managed within the institution so that we can know what is happening what type of food are they eating or are they eating? What time are the gates locked or the gates become locked? (LEC 4).*

*I think university have more benefits than the college to such an extent ninety percent of the benefits they have we don't have like residence (STU 5).*

From the comments made by participants the college doesn't have students' accommodation and it was suggested that if the college could have an accommodation for students they would be able to control and monitor students. A student raised a point that TVET college students do not receive same benefits as university students like the issue of residence and many other things. It appears that the college depends on independent landlords for accommodation of the students.

#### 4.3.4.6 NSFAS allowance.

Students advised that the college should pay their allowance on time that would boost their attendance. Students commented:

*If they could give us NSFAS allowance every month and the money you will keep for a month so you transport yourself to college (STU 2).*

*Then atleast you will budget for your transportation so that we can be here every day (STU 3).*

The issues of NSFAS has been mentioned many times by participants as the most challenging and frustrating process. Participants proposed that the payments for their allowance should be made and released on time to avoid cases where student would not have travel or transport allowance and I believed that they would save and budget properly for a month and attend classes.

#### 4.3.4.7 Extra mural activities

According to the participants, social activities should be included as part of college activities to encourage students to participate and college should not be perceived as offering academic only. Lecturer and student commented:

*Student entertainment is needed so to cool down just a little since the college used to have them in the past, and I don't know the reasons not to do them anymore (STU 4).*

*Sport activities should be introduced so that students can feel that they are part of the college (LEC 4).*

From the interviews' comments it appeared that the college does not have extra mural activities and students need to have sporting activities just to engage in college life besides academics. The college life is boring if there are no extra mural activities and it is ideal to include the sport activities that would stimulate the mind of the students and form bond among each other.

## 4.4 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Document analysis included reviewing DHET public further and education and training college attendance and punctuality policy. The purpose of document review in this study was to examine, how the college has been managing students' absenteeism. Each student registered at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District was issued with the attendance policy and obliged by signing it as acknowledgement. The policy was



introduced by DHET for TVET colleges to enforce a commitment of students in attendance and punctuality to improve students' academics.

In viewing the DHET attendance policy, the TVET college at Nelson Mandela Bay District Bay monitors students' absenteeism using various methods in ensuring that that students' attendance is managed. Students are supplied with attendance registers for each subject period attended and captured weekly. The TVET college at the Nelson Mandela Bay District acts in accordance with DHET attendance policy, however the college don't exercise discipline as stipulated in the policy. The impression was that students' absenteeism increased because disciplinary or hearings were not conducted.

The concern regarding DHET attendance policy is that students are not clear how to communicate their intended absence. The lack of implementation of the attendance policy raised concern and negative aspects to determine whether the policy is effective or not.

Students absence looks like was not reviewed regularly and the college does not exercise disciplinary actions besides that NSFAS payments However, lecturers have not complied with the DHET instruction or guidelines in handling and recording the late arrival of students. The TVET College management does not have the records of the students who arrive late for college classes and there is no indication to class registers. Student attendance registers are captured on a weekly basis, where lecturers, at the end of the week, submit these registers to administrative clerks for capturing and record-keeping. The TVET college issues to students the summary of attendance report on a monthly or quarterly basis to keep the students aware about their level of attendance. The practice around DHET attendance policy could be strengthen and positive, if all guidelines were followed at TVET college.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented data analysis and research findings collected from participants' interviews which were segmented into themes and sub-themes. The findings revealed that factors influencing students' attendance include transport issues, family background issues, NSFAS allowances, personal factors, disliking the course, college-related issues,

and issues with lecturers. Students' absenteeism put challenges to the college management and lecturers, and measures to deal with students' absenteeism were also discussed and participants recommended strategies that can be used to increase student attendance. The next chapter presents the discussions of major findings, summary, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter data analysis and interpretation of research findings were discussed. This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. The purpose of the study was to investigate factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District and also offered possible strategies that could be employed to deal with challenges.

#### 5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

**Chapter One:** This chapter presented introduction and background to the study, problem statement, rationale for the study, significant of the study, objectives, researched questions and methods were given. The theoretical framework that guided the study was discussed and concepts used in the study were explained.

**Chapter Two:** The second chapter of the study provided a literature review related to factors influencing student absenteeism at a TVET college. It outlined the challenges posed by students' absenteeism. Measures to deal with students' absenteeism and strategies to manage it were also discussed.

**Chapter Three:** The chapter focused on the methodology used in this study. A comprehensive explanation and justification of research paradigm, research approach, design, methods, data collection strategies were given. Trustworthiness, ethical considerations, benchmarking of the research and pilot report was discussed. Information about population and site selection was given.

**Chapter Four:** This chapter presented data analysis and research findings using themes and sub themes. The data were collected through focus groups and semi structured interviews and participants of this study were students, lecturers, student support service manager and acting registrar of the TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District. Findings of the study revealed various factor influencing students' absenteeism. Data findings revealed challenge posed by students' absenteeism to lecturers and

management. Lastly, the research findings provided different strategies that the college can apply to manage students' absenteeism.

**Chapter Five:** The last chapter provides discussions, summary and recommendation of the study including limitations and delimitations. It provides conclusions and recommendations drawn from the research findings and recommendation for future research.

### **5.3. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The summary of findings of the research are given in terms of themes. The main research question was: Which factors are influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District and which strategies can be recommended to deal with the challenge? Sub-questions were formulated to answer the research question; the following sub-questions were asked:

- What do students perceive as factors that affect their class attendance?
- What are the challenges posed by student absenteeism to the college management and lecturers?
- What kind of measures are in place to deal with factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District?
- What strategies can be recommended to deal with factors influencing students' absenteeism at a TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District?

#### **5.3.1 Theme 1: Factors influencing students' absenteeism**

The study adopted the theoretical framework model of Taunton, Hope, Woods and Bolt (1995), predicting factors influencing students' absenteeism. The theoretical framework predicted that students' absenteeism was influenced by socio economic factors, student related factors and college related factors in this study.

The first component of the model deals with socio economic factors, students couldn't attend classes because of transport related issues. Ndahepele et al (2018), revealed in

their study that higher education was expensive and students couldn't afford education expense such as tuition fees, taxi fare and pocket money.

NSFAS played a major role in increasing students' absenteeism. It was reported that late payments from NSFAS funding impacted negatively on student attendance as majority of students are NSFAS beneficiaries. In this study it was reported that students' absenteeism was caused by transport related issue, majority of the student lives in townships that are far from college sometimes they would miss first period or arrive late to attend classes. Figure 2.1 adapted from Otto (2016:10) shows the type of absenteeism that formed the basis of this study. This figure exhibits a distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence as well as the reasons (valid or unacceptable) associated with each type of absenteeism. Additionally, it also draws a distinction between partial and full day absence. Partial absence means that student is absent for certain period and full day means that student is absent for the entire day at college. In this case, the findings indicated that students' absenteeism could be partial due to lateness and regarded unacceptable reason and further be unauthorised absence.

The second component of the model deals with student-related factors, where students could not attend classes because they were dealing with personal issues like drugs and gangsterism and health issues. The study found that attendance was a challenge to students who are affected by drugs and gangsterism issues. Oghuvbu (2008) and Pehlivan (2011) alternatively concurred that when students keep friends that are not studying, their behaviour change and affect their class attendance. Wadesango and Machingimbi (2011) indicate similar findings from the research study and indicated that students' absenteeism would be affected if students' hangout with people who do not study. The study also pointed out that health issues also affects students' attendance. The study results are also consistent with Ajiboye and Tella (2006) who asserted that student attendance was also affected by health challenges of the students.

Disliking the course and students not having a proper knowledge of the course contributed to students' absenteeism, which in some instances or events lead to student dropping out or deregistering the course, bunking classes. Even though was regarded as unacceptable reasons. Wadesango and Machingimbi (2011), in their study discovered

that high absenteeism of students may be linked to a lack of interest in the course enrolled or module.

The third component of the model dealt with college related factors. Edge Hills University (2012), claimed that students failed to attend classes because the content or subject was too boring. Lecturers reported in this study that students' expectations were not met because they joined the college with the hope that they would be exposed to the practical component of the programme or course, and if their expectations are not met and students started to lose interest or get bored with the content. It was shared that students enrolled at TVET college with expectations that they will receive practical and theoretical component of the studies.

Lecturers play an important role in a student life and most of the time students are inspired by their lecturers. The study revealed that relationship between lecturer and student contributed to students' absenteeism. This resulted to students attending classes selectively due to bad relationship that they have with the lecturers. Students reported that some lecturers lack respect for them and they embarrassed them in front of their peers. Şahin et al (2016) indicated that relationship between lecturers and students was important factor that contribute to academic performance of the student.

### **5.3.2 Theme 2: Challenges posed by students' absenteeism to lecturers and management.**

Lecturers complained in this study that they are struggling to complete the syllabi because they often found themselves repeating lessons to students who were absent. These finding are consistent with Otto's (2016) research where she indicated that lecturers experienced hardships to continue with new topic because they have to bridge the gap as students lack previous knowledge of the topic due to students' absenteeism. This study discovered that while lecturers attempt to repeat the previous lesson in order to accommodate those students who were absent. However, some students become bored or demotivated as they know that the lesson would be repeated and as result they avoid attending that class. The researcher believes that if lecturers could continue with their daily lesson plan and not repeat lesson for absentees, students would understand the

importance of attendance and take full responsibility that it is their duty to catch up with the work covered while they were absent. In addition, DHET (2012) attendance policy emphasised that students are responsible to complete the work covered while absent or late for classes.

Kang and Kerr (1990) asserted that a student who attend classes poorly respond poorly to the instructions of the lecturer and perform poorly in academics. This study found out that poor attendance contributed negatively on students' performance. Students participants reported that missing classes deprived them the opportunity of clearing the confusion on the discussed topic or lesson. In the literature review, Khalid and Mehmoud (2017) and Otto (2016) highlighted that class attendance was important in improving students' marks, boosting student confidence, engaging with lecturer and peers. The study reported that students had outstanding assessments due to poor attendance. Kang and Kerr (1990) and Muir (2009) suggested that student should attend classes regularly to improve and perform better academically.

This study also discovered that lecturers were not receiving any support from college management to deal with students' absenteeism. Lack of support service from management may have contributed to students' absenteeism and have given an impression that attendance was not as important because management was not doing anything to support them in dealing with students' absenteeism. Klem and Connell (2004) asserted that lecturer support and students' involvement in decision-making has a significant role in engaging students to commit in college environment. The researcher believed that it might have happened that lecturers lost the interest of addressing students' absenteeism because college management was invisible to extend their support to lecturers. Lecturer participants in this study reported that the college management dismissed the reason that students' absenteeism was one of the major factors that student perform poorly on academic review meetings.

#### **5.3.4 Theme 3: Measures in place to manage factors influencing students' absenteeism**

Case and Jet (2007), asserted that monitoring system was an important tool in managing as it assists to improve attendance and intervention for students' absenteeism. This study revealed that the TVET college was using tracking system as part of their monitoring system. DHET attendance policy gives clear guideline to TVET colleges to identify trend of students who develop absenteeism or lateness. The SSS manager reported that even though they have tracking system, it was not successful as it should have been due to the student support service officers at campus levels that are not performing their duties and submitting incomplete reports. The students support service division is the key department that support and guide students through their journey.

TVET colleges were given a directive and responsibility to manage students' attendance using the DHET student attendance policy. This study revealed that the student attendance policy could not be successful to manage student attendance because the policy was not fully implemented and it was difficult to examine if the policy was good management tool. However, management participants reported that DHET attendance policy was not successful to manage students' absenteeism because students were not denied the entry for final examination even though they do not receive NSFAS allowances due to poor attendance. Gbadamosi (2015) affirm that organisational policy plays an important role in managing and handling certain cases and it up to the management how they engage and implement the policy.

#### **5.3.5 Theme 4: Strategies to manage and reduce students' absenteeism.**

In this study, participants made recommendations to improve and manage absenteeism. Kramer and associates (2003) argue that retention strategies are the key function of an institution in managing attendance and various methods that could be applied in ensuring that students are sustained. Lotkowksi et al (2004) believed that retention strategies have positive influence in managing the impacts of students' absenteeism. This study recommended the following strategies to reduce students' absenteeism:



It was reported from this study that students become exhausted to attend from eight o'clock to three o'clock with thirty minutes' break. It seemed that the student attendance timetable was the problem that might have contributed to students' attendance. Lecturer and SSS manager participants recommended that the student timetable should be revised. Participants believed that it could improve students' attendance and academic performance. They believed that students would have time to do assignments, prepare for tests and other activities. This suggestion was similar with claims made by Ginty and Boland (2016) where they indicated that students are absent from class because they are preparing presentations, assignments and upcoming tests.

Lecturers reported in this study that they cannot go extra mile because of the relationship that they have with management, they have trust issue which were resulted by unresolved labour issue or outstanding. It was suggested by lecturers and acting registrar participants that relationship of management and lecturing staff should improve. It was highlighted that both management and lectures would be able to discuss strategies that would improve students' absenteeism.

The participants further recommend that the college needed to consider to have a clinic to offer support service to the students who constantly absent themselves due to health issues. It was revealed that students don't attend classes or come to college when they are sick. The suggestion would improve students' attendance based on the findings made by Wallace (2017), who indicated that chronic illness was the cause of student absenteeism.

Participants of the study also recommend that college management should go and negotiate with bus companies since the transport appeared to be the major factor affecting students' attendance, discussed the timetable schedule and stops for students. The participants reported that the college lack students' residence. It was suggested that the college should consider to have their own student residence not depending on the private landlords. The researcher believed that the recommendations made by participants were good to monitor students and the cash flow that was paid to private landlords would circulate within the college.

The issue of NSFAS payments was emphasised or stressed many times in the study by participants, and suggestions were made that if NSFAS travel allowances could be made on time that would reduce the students' absenteeism and prevent students strike. Lastly student participants recommended that the management should ensure that the college life is exciting for student by including extra mural activities.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEACH FINDINGS**

This study scrutinised all areas that were supposed to have been considered in research. When researcher explored factors influencing students' absenteeism it was discovered that the research findings were similar to the literature even though literature was based in high school and universities.

This study has revealed that the students' absenteeism was affected by socio economic, student related and college factors. It appeared from the research findings that NSFAS allowance and transport related issues were major contributors in students' absenteeism. College did not comply with attendance policy they were selective in applying the guideline or instructions, sometimes they would implement the guideline which instructed them to excluded students for final examination when attendance was below the agreed percentage and NSFAS allowance was fully implemented by the college. It appeared that same cases were treated different because the policy was followed to give the directive in managing students' attendance. I believed that the organisation success lies in the teamwork. Relationship between management and lectures was broken to an extent that lecturers were not eager to go an extra mile. Its appeared that relationships with management team and lecturer can be amended if they could resolve their labor issues.

#### **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made concerning the improvement of students' attendance:

- The TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay district should try and establish shuttle service where students would be transported without paying and use student card to use services. This would eliminate student use bus fare or transport fare as excuse

not to attend classes.

- Disciplinary committee should be established consisting of lecturers, student representative, SSS officer and campus manager or deputy manager. The committee would discuss the level of attendance and exercise discipline for students who have attendance below the agreed percentage.
- Policy should be fully implemented especially the guideline that student should be excluded for final examination if his/her attendance is below acceptable percentage.
- NSFAS bursary allowance should include meal voucher per month for TVET college students despite the fact they stay at home but when they at campuses they can use the meal voucher cause some they attend while they didn't eat and have nothing back at home.
- NSFAS allowance should be paid on time eliminating the long waiting period of students claiming for NSFAS allowance.
- Management should try and resolve the issues of employee especially the human resource or labour related issues speedily and amicably since they affect academic performance of the college
- Management should be the ones giving directive and how to manage student absenteeism and lecturer must feel they have the support of management.
- College should employ qualified psychologist to deal with the issues that affect the students and that should form part of the SSS division support service.
- The TVET college should consider to have its own clinic were students would be assisted promptly not depending on the public clinic.
- Sport and arts department and SSS division in the college should plan and bring activities that would stimulate and keep college life exciting for students.

## **5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The populations were limited to NC(V) students, lecturers and two managers from head office of TVET college due to time constrains otherwise the researcher would have expanded the study to the four campuses of the TVET college and to some extent generalised the findings. The study was restricted to one college in Nelson Mandela Bay

Districts that the findings can be generalised to other college situated in Nelson Mandela Bay District but cannot be generalised to all other TVET colleges in South Africa. My interest to the research topic may have influenced my interpretations of the study findings but my supervisor applied proficiency in checking the possible biasness.

This study was limited to National vocation certificate programme of TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District. The purpose of the study was to investigate factors influencing student absenteeism and the strategies that can be employed to deal with the challenge. The participants of this study involved six students, six lecturers of NC(V) programme from two campuses of the TVET college, SSS manager and Acting registrar of the TVET college. Student support liaison officers of the two campuses and other lecturers and students were not included as the participants of the study. The findings of the study apply to the two campuses and may not apply to the other campuses of the TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay district as the factors influencing student absenteeism may vary from campus to campus and these findings can't be generalised.

## **5.7 FUTURE RESEARCH**

After finalising the data analysis, the researcher recommends that further research should be conducted in investigating which factors influencing students' absenteeism and how they are managed so that students could give a better perspective in the research topic. There is a need for future research in this research topic because this study was carried on small populations and other students, lecturers were excluded in participating therefore a larger quantitative study is recommended.

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## ANNEXURE A LETTER FOR REQUESTING PERMISSION

University of South Africa  
Preller street, Muckleneuk  
Pretoria  
0002  
11 June 2019

11 Constance Court  
Millhouse Road  
Uitenhage  
6629

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY**

I, Yolisa Shiella Myataza, a Master's student in education management at the above mentioned University, the research topic: **Managing factors influencing students' absenteeism at TVET college in Nelson Mandela Bay District**. I kindly request your permission to collect data from students, lecturers and management institution. There will be minimal or no disruption of learning during this period as data will be collected after college hours. The findings will be shared among all stake holders (college principal, student support services manager, lecturers and students). Participants names and the campus name will remain anonymous in all publications. I have attached the following documents: Informed consent and Data collection instrument. I intend to data collection as soon I get ethical clearance certificate from the university and granted permission by your office. Thanking you most sincerely.

Yours Sincerely.  
Myataza Yolisa  
Student no.60110759  
Cell no.: 0734130164/0833843860  
Email address: yollymyataza@gmail.com

## ANNEXURE B PERMISSION LETTER



Date: 26 June 2019

Enquiries: Mr S Gana  
Email: sgana@emcol.co.za  
Contact: 041 996 1806

Ms. Yolisa Myataza  
11 Constance Court  
Millhouse Road  
Uitenhage  
6229

Dear Miss Myataza

RE: **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT EASTCAPE MIDLANDS COLLEGE**

Kindly be advised that permission has been granted for you to conduct research at the Eastcape Midlands TVET College under the topic **"Managing Factors influencing student's absenteeism of the college in Nelson Mandela Bay District Eastern Cape"**.

The condition of this permission is subject to your compliance with ethical resume consideration as stipulated in your application (Sec. 6) as well as non-interference with teaching and learning time/activities at the college.

Eastcape Midlands College wishes you success in your studies and would eagerly wait to be informed of the outcome of your research.

Yours Faithfully

S GANA  
ACTING DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Creating New Futures

## ANNEXURE C ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2019/07/24

Ref: **2019/07/24/60110759/33/MC**

Dear Miss Myataza

Name: Miss YS Myataza

Student No.: 60110759

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2019/07/24 to 2022/07/24

**Researcher(s):** Name: Miss YS Myataza  
E-mail address: 60110759@mylife.unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27 73 413 0164

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Prof S Mokoena  
E-mail address: mokoesp@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27 82 675 6155

**Title of research:**

**Exploring factors influencing students' absenteeism at TVET College in Nelson Mandela Bay District.**

**Qualification:** M. Ed in Educational Leadership and Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/07/24 to 2022/07/24.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2019/07/24 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2022/07/24**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.


*Note:*

*The reference number **2019/07/24/60110759/33/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Prof AT Motlhabane**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



**Prof PM Sebate**  
**ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

**ANNEXURE D**  
**LETTER FOR LANGUAGE EDITING**

**PRO-MOL LANGUAGE SERVICES**

First Floor, Fussel House  
48 Athol Oaklands Road  
Corner Willowbrook Close  
Melrose North  
2196  
[editpromol@gmail.com](mailto:editpromol@gmail.com)  
+27 60 797 8628

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Date: December 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

**DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE EDITING AND PROOFREADING**

We hereby declare that Ms YOLISA SHIELLA MYATAZA, a registered Master of Education (MEd) degree student at the University of South Africa (Unisa), submitted a copy of her dissertation to us for academic language editing and proofreading .

We wish her well in her studies.

Regards

Molapo Nkitseng  
Principal Language Specialist  
Pro-Mol Language Services

## **ANNEXURE E**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS**

1. How often do you attend classes?
2. Do you think attendance is important and why?
3. Have you ever been absent from certain classes? Why?
4. What prevented you from attending classes?
5. Did you report your absence to management?
6. Are you aware of the attendance policy as it is applicable to you as a student?
7. Do you think class attendance affects your performance?
8. How does the management deal with poor attendance?
9. What do you think could be done to increase students' attendance?



**ANNEXURE F**  
**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LECTURERS**

1. What is the state of your student attendance at your campus? Explain.
2. Which factors do you think influence student absenteeism at your campus?
3. Do you think these factors have any effects on the performance of students?
4. What measures are in place to control factors that influence students' absenteeism?
5. How does high student absenteeism affect your planning?
6. What support do you receive from the management of the college in dealing with student absenteeism?
7. What strategies can you recommend to the college management to reduce and manage student absenteeism?

## **ANNEXURE G**

### **INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE FOR STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE MANAGER**

1. What is the state of student attendance at your college?
2. What factors do you think lead to student absenteeism?
3. How does the Student Support Service office support student who do not attend classes regularly?
4. Does the college have any policy to manage student attendance?
5. Which policies are in place to manage student absenteeism at your college?
6. How effective is the attendance policy in controlling student absenteeism?
7. What support do you give to lecturers to deal with student absenteeism?
8. What measures are in place to mediate factors that influence students' absenteeism at your college?
9. What strategies can the college consider to apply in managing student absenteeism?

**ANNEXURE H**  
**INTERVIEWS SCEHDULE FOR THE ACADEMIC REGISTRAR**

1. What is the state of student attendance at your college?
2. What factors do you think leads to student absenteeism?
3. How does student absenteeism affect your college's academic performance?
4. Do you have any policies to manage student absenteeism?
5. Which policies are those?
6. How do you implement those policies?
7. How do you share those policies with other stakeholders?
8. How effective are those policies in managing student absenteeism?
9. What strategies can your college apply to reduce and manage student absenteeism?